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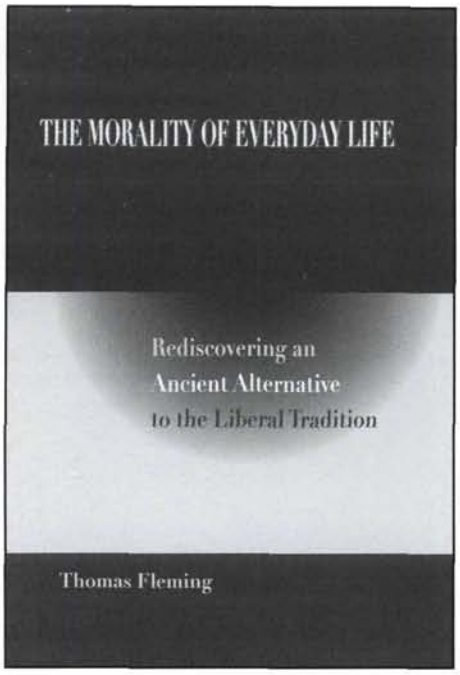

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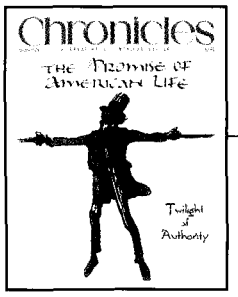

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A publication of The Rockford Institute.
Editorial and Advertising Offices:
928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103.
Website: *www.chroniclesmagazine.org*
Editorial Phone: (815) 964-5054.
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Subscription Department: P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054. Call 1-800-877-5459.

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Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture (ISSN 0887-5731) is published monthly for $39.00 (foreign subscriptions add $12 for surface delivery, $48 for Air Mail) per year by The Rockford Institute, 928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Preferred periodical postage paid at Rockford, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Chronicles, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054.

The views expressed in *Chronicles* are the authors' alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Rockford Institute or of its directors. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE
Vol. 29, No. 1 January 2005
Printed in the United States of America

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On the Western Front

Paul Gottfried's claim in "Where Have All the Nazis Gone?" (*The Western Front*, October) that "both sides had behaved recklessly in 1914" is incorrect. A close scrutiny of the July Crisis indicates recklessness mixed with mendacity in Vienna and Berlin, and merely reactive and predictable responses from Paris, St. Petersburg, and London. Dr. Gottfried then goes further, turning the claim of "equal recklessness" into the assertion that the blame for the war itself was, or should be treated as, equal. He further asserts that to claim otherwise is indicative either of foreign Teutonophobia or of German self-hatred, and that only a post-national leftist could uphold the "largely refuted" thesis of German culpability advanced by Fritz Fischer, whom he proceeds to malign intemperately.

Historians of widely different backgrounds, including those with impeccable conservative credentials, accept that the Wilhelmine establishment welcomed the prospect of war and encouraged Austria-Hungary to issue an impossible ultimatum to Serbia. Both Central Powers acted knowing that their actions could lead to an all-out war unless Russia and/or France climbed down at the last minute and meekly abdicated their status and role as great powers.

Berlin needed a seemingly righteous cause, the latter-day Ems Telegram, to unite the nation and, in particular, to persuade its millions of Social Democrats and Roman Catholics that the coming war was just. It encouraged Vienna to go ahead with its ultimatum that would lead Russia to threaten Austria, so that its move against Russia could be presented as a selfless rescue of her aggrieved Danubian ally. Germany thus invited a French response; that it was fully expected, and indeed desired, is proved by the prompt activation of the Schlieffen Plan. It entailed the wanton violation of Belgian neutrality, thereby making British intervention inevitable.

The only other power behaving with comparable recklessness was Austria. To contain Serbia and curtail her Piedmontism may have been a "rational" objective; to do so at the risk of an all-out war, however, was not. The policy of resolving nationalist tensions within the monarchy by absorbing ever-more-restless Slavs was self-defeating in the extreme. Francis Ferdinand's trip to Sarajevo on St. Vitus' Day (of all days) was as provocative and reckless as it would have been for the prince of Wales to go to Dublin in state pomp on St. Patrick's Day of that same year.

It is unfair and inaccurate for Dr. Gottfried to imply that historians who hold Germany primarily culpable for the tragedy of 1914 subscribe to "a straight line from Bismarck to Auschwitz." The line was interrupted in 1890. The mentally unstable kaiser and his coterie gratuitously discarded Bismarck's conceptual framework, while lacking his skill and his prudence. Seeking to break out of a self-imposed and imagined "encirclement," they rejected Bismarck's flexibility of external liaisons in favor of implacable hostility to France and Russia and a rigid alliance with Austria. The Iron Chancellor would never have allowed the worn-out Viennese tail to wag the dynamic German dog, and he repeatedly warned that the Balkans must never be allowed to act as the proverbial powder keg. His successors in July 1914 disregarded that advice on both counts.

As a foe of our present-day neocons, Dr. Gottfried should realize that, in 1914, the Wilhelmine ruling stratum's understanding of the State Reason was corrupted by ideological obsessions that were eminently neoconservative in spirit and logic. The naval lobby, the colonial lobby, the annexationist lobby, and the *Voelkisch* lobby all beat the drum that could have come, with a few semantic modifications, straight from the pages of the *Weekly Standard*. Like the leadership of the Project for a New American Century today, the Wilhelmine military and diplomatic establishment did not allow any "realist" calculations to subject their grand design to critical scrutiny. They were all too happy to brand all moderation as weakness and all doubt as treason.

—Srdja Trifkovic
Highland Park, Chicago

Dr. Gottfried Replies:

Srdja Trifkovic is wrong about the reasons for my ascription of Teutonophobia

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to Fischer and his school. Fischer and his disciples Wolfgang Mommsen, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, and Immanuel Geiss go well beyond editorializing against the Germans for the recklessness that led to war in 1914. Indeed, they view the outbreak of World War I as illustrating Germany's bid for world hegemony and trace this tendency to the founding of the Second Empire and to the failure of the German people to develop according to a Western liberal model. Dr. Trifkovic's favorable remarks about Bismarck would be every bit as offensive to the Fischerites as my questioning of their causal explanation for the war.

Why have I "maligned intemperately" Fischer, whose attachment to the Nazi Party is a matter of historical record? His postwar conversion is simply an illustration of his blatant opportunism.

As for the contrast between Germany's and Austria-Hungary's war fever and the Entente's "merely reactive and predictable responses" in 1914, Dr. Trifkovic must be joking. The Serbian government was then supporting Black Hand terrorists, culminating in the assassination by one of their members of the Austrian archduke and his consort on June 28, 1914. The Austrian government was justified to send an ultimatum to the Serbian monarchy, though what they sent ignored the counsels of moderation that came from the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister Count Tisza. That the Austrian government had good reason to react strongly to the Serbian support of South Slav terrorism within its borders, a fact documented by (among many others) pro-Allied historian Joachim Remak, Luigi Albertini, and William Langer, should be self-evident.

From 1892 (the year of its alliance with Russia) onward, France was working to push her ally into confrontations with the Germans and Austro-Hungarians. The French foreign ministry also nurtured the hope that the First Balkan War in 1912, in which Serbia and other Balkan powers fell upon Germany's client, Ottoman Turkey, would result in considerable harm to the Central Powers. (The Germans and Austrians disappointed the French, however, by staying out of this imbroglio.) As George Kennan has argued in *The Fateful Alliance*, the French alliance with Russia had a revisionist goal, retrieving what the French had lost to Prussia after a disastrous war in 1871. Neither France nor the Panslavists who pushed for it in Russia viewed it as a mere defensive pact.

By 1914, as a result of expanding the period of conscription in 1913, the French had raised an army almost as large as the German one, despite a much smaller population. If Germany were a belligerent power, neither the size of her army nor her military outlays would indicate this fact. Nor did the British government, Niall Ferguson observes, embody the pacifist mood that some historians wish to find in it. Between 1907 and 1909, unbeknownst to its people, it had made striking concessions to the French in case of a war with Germany. In the envisaged war, the Germans would necessarily strike the first blow, given their diplomatic and military encirclement by Russia and France and given the far larger military forces of their enemies. The English were also significantly willing to make an amphibious landing on the Belgian coast to prosecute the war in question. Well before Germany went to war against Russia, following Russia's full mobilization on Germany's eastern border on July 31, 1914, the British government had begun to establish a naval blockade against Germany. This blockade would continue to be imposed, causing widespread famine, until the postwar German government had signed the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. If these are "purely reactive responses," I have no idea what reckless ones by the Entente would have looked like.

Nationalist zealots were active on both sides of the European alliance system before 1914, and for every member of the Pan-German League, one could find Pan-Slavs, French revanchists, and raging British imperialists. The comparison of either side, however, to the posturing imperialists at the *Weekly Standard* may be stretching a point. No European nationalist leader in 1914 was quite so oafish or devoid of "realist calculations."

On the Accordion

In Scott P. Richert's otherwise fine article "Polka Can't Die" (*The Rockford Files*, November 2004), I was somewhat pained by his only slightly veiled disdain for the accordion. Polka without accordion? As soulless as Bach on a Moog synthesizer!

His aversion does place him in some traditional company. A Daumier cartoon has a character whose snooker game is disturbed by the sound of an accordion saying, "One does not yet have the right to kill the people who play this instrument, but there is hope we will soon get it!"

Invented in the early 19th century, the accordion became wildly popular with the lower classes of Europe. Probably the vast majority of the immigrants to this country loved it. From the hard-driving R&B that Zydeco musician Clifton Chenier was doing in the mid-50's to the tasteful jazz playing of Art Van Dam or the traditional Irish accordionist playing slow airs that should make a stone weep, the instrument has a versatility, subtlety, and emotional range that, to my ears, even approaches the human voice.

I'm afraid the 'lectric guitar is the folk instrument of our brave age. The match is perfect.

—*Mark Kennedy*
New Orleans, LA

Mr. Richert Replies:

My remarks about the accordion (as my friend Mark Kennedy has probably guessed) were in jest, particularly the final lines: "To a standing ovation, they leave the stage as the next act, a zydeco band, starts to set up. I want to stick around, but the children decide it's time to leave: The zydeco band has an accordion." I am, in fact, a fan of the accordion, at least in the right place and at the right time (and played by the right musician). Both zydeco and polka are almost unimaginable without the accordion—almost, but not quite, as the Polkaholics have shown. (And we should remember that, while the accordion predated the polka, the first polkas were played not on the accordion but on violins.)

The trouble today is that most people's experience of the accordion has been in the wrong place, at the wrong time, and most emphatically at the hands of the wrong musician. And unfortunately, those experiences have tainted the music most closely associated with the accordion in the popular imagination.

The danger is that the polka, a musical form that has as many varieties as there are European ethnic groups (and American regions), will wither away because of those experiences. By adopting the "folk instrument of our brave age," however, the Polkaholics have gotten people interested not only in polka but in polka *played on accordions*. My children are a case in point: They are just as happy to sing along to Frankie Yankovic's "No Beer Today" now as they are to listen to the Polkaholics' "Old Style Beer." But that wouldn't have happened without the Polkaholics.

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by Thomas Fleming

In the Wake of November

George W. Bush's electoral victory stunned pundits and pollsters. I was more surprised by the preelection polls than by the President's margin of victory, which I had been correctly predicting for several months. When the Zogby numbers were brought to me at the end of the day, predicting a Kerry victory by 100 electoral votes, my confidence in my own judgment was shaken for a moment, but then I reflected. Which is more likely, that Zogby should have made a mistake—or let his ethnic (Arab) prejudice against Bush bias his interpretation—or that the American people had suddenly lurched either to the left or into conservative sanity?

Even before the nomination of John Kerry, I was offering odds on the Republican candidate. It was not that President Bush was a particularly strong candidate; but he, at least, looked and talked like a normal American, albeit not a very well-educated one. For many conservatives and all leftists, "anybody but Bush" was preferable; anybodies, however, do not win elections. The Democrats needed *somebody*, and what I doubted was the Democratic Party's ability to come up even with the half-a-man who could defeat the President. As it turned out, there was no probable candidate running in the Democratic primaries.

At the start of the campaign, there were just two major issues: the war in Iraq and the economy. In order for a Democrat to win, the war could not simply go from bad to worse, as it did: There would have to be a calamity. That did not happen. The other possible opportunity was an economic meltdown. Instead, several sectors of the economy showed improvement. Predictably, Bush lost many industrial sections, because of the continued deterioration of manufacturing; overall, however, there was no reason for a majority of voters to unseat a sitting president during the "War on Terror."

The nomination of John Kerry gave the Republicans a third issue, though it took some time for them to realize it: the—do not say the words or you are a bigot—Culture War. Who knows how many voters turned out to reject "gay marriage"? Anecdotally (and this includes exit-poll data, which is only a quantified version of anecdotes), a significant minority, composed especially of evangelicals but including many Mexican-Americans, viewed the election as a referendum on the homosexualist agenda, and, while Karl Rove now poohpoohs the mere 22 percent that voted on the basis of the social issues, any significant loss of those voters would have given the election to Kerry. There is some evidence that Serbs and other Orthodox Christians may have turned the tide in Ohio, when they discovered that Kerry had openly consorted with KLA terrorists from Kosovo. At least the Serbs have something to celebrate.

Considering the assets enjoyed by an incumbent president during a war, President Bush's margin in the popular vote might be interpreted as a defeat. What the President and his advisors should note is that the moral and social issues they tried to run away from are the issues that secured his reelection.

In voting for George W. Bush, "Red State Americans" were rejecting the Democratic Party, which, in its current form, is enough to scare any normal person into voting straight-ticket Republican. The old party of labor bosses, white ethnics, and Southerners—Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion, as the Republicans used to call it—has turned into the party of criminals and perverts: immoral single girls and mothers who want to kill their babies; cross-dressing fags in bridal veils; and Hollywood stars who want to make themselves immortal by eating someone else's dead baby. (Stripped of humanitarian and scientific rhetoric, that is really the point of fetal stem-cell research.)

It is unlikely that the Republican bosses, Karl Rove and Dick Cheney, are paying much attention to their electoral base. In fact, their first postelection moves might be interpreted as a slap in the face to their most important supporters: conservative evangelicals. The pro-life John Ashcroft—admittedly a kook of the first water—is out, replaced by the pro-infanticide Alberto Gonzales. As a judge, Mr. Gonzales took the extreme position by ruling against parental notification in cases of underage girls seeking abortions. When a Supreme Court vacancy opens up, it will be Gonzales and Arlen Specter, as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, who will have the most to say about replacements. There was the usual shadow-boxing over Specter's election, but I never had any doubt. Neither the President nor the Senate Republicans care anything about the sanctity of human life except as a stick to beat the Democrats with.

Many conservatives hoped against hope—and common sense—that Colin Powell, despite his ineffective record as Secretary of State, would stay and that the incompetents who mismanaged the war in Iraq—Rice, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Feith—would go. But the worst has happened. The neoconservatives—men of, at best, doubtful loyalty to this country—remain and Condoleezza (I hope I have the correct number of *e*'s and *z*'s) Rice has replaced General Powell as Secretary of State. It hardly matters what Mrs Rice thinks: Her lack of ability and strange public performances ensure that she will play a negligible role in making foreign policy. Those decisions will be left up to a cynical and bungling team of Bush foreign-policy advisors—Vice President Cheney and his neoconservatives, Secretary Rumsfeld and his—who make us long for the pragmatic Machiavellians of the first George Bush.

Conservatives can take some consolation from the election results. In most respects, John Kerry would probably have made a worse President than George W. Bush, and the turnout of Red State Americans against homosexualism is a healthy sign. They should not, however, expect much from Bush's second term, and it is not too early to think about how to block whatever candidate GOP leaders are already grooming. c

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PROPOSITION 200, a measure requiring that applicants for state benefits and state suffrage show proof of eligibility for these privileges, was adopted in Arizona on November 2, 2004, by 56 percent of the total vote and 47 percent of the Hispanic portion of it. This happened in the face of opposition from the Democratic governor of the state; Arizona's mostly Republican congressional delegation; its two GOP Senators; and the Arizona Chamber of Commerce. In Colorado, Mr. Immigration Reform—Rep. Tom Tancredo—easily won election to a fourth congressional term by taking 60 percent of the vote. A few days after the election, the Bush administration, claiming to have won 44 percent of the Hispanic vote (up from 35 percent in 2000, spokesmen insisted), announced that it was set to hoist its long-derailed amnesty plan back onto the tracks and open the throttle.

"Fate leads the willing but drives the stubborn," said Seneca. The more psephologists study the election returns, the less likely it appears that exit polls were actually correct in the 44-percent estimate. Even if, in the end, they prove to have been correct, however, the import of what they have to tell us is that 56 percent of Hispanic voters voted *against* George W. Bush—the same percentage, exactly, of all voters who voted for Proposition 200 in Arizona. A bird in the hand is supposed to be worth two in the bush; so why can't Karl Rove be content with the constituency he has? Why doesn't he set, as the goal in 2008, taking 76 percent of Arizona's total vote for the national ticket by pressing Congress for immigration restriction? The paradoxical answer—flabbergasting as the suggestion sounds—may be that his boss received 88 percent of the white vote nationally last November.

Very clearly, the Republican strategists, from the President himself on down, believe that, over the next several decades, brown voters must increase and white ones must decrease. The imperative, of course, is unconvincing; indeed, it is false (beyond a few percentage points, at least). The brown electorate will only add to its numbers if white politicians in Washington let more brown people into the country; and there is, currently, no majoritarian political force demanding that they do so. If amnesty prevails, and if immigration (legal *and* illegal) is not curtailed, it will only be because Washington wished to do as it did—for absolutely no good or coherent reason.

The Republicans would defend their actions by explaining that a vicious circle holds: More browns coming into the country mean more brown votes cast, while more brown voters mean more voters angered by restrictionist voters to vote for Democratic candidates. In fact, they are subject to no such pressure, since 47 percent of Hispanic voters are opposed to further Hispanic (and other) immigration to the United States. In short, there is no vicious circle, since the circle in question can be broken into at any point and reversed—or smashed altogether. The demographic-psephological "problem" Bush-Rove identify for their party is, in fact, no problem at all, and fixing nonexistent problems is almost the definition of a senseless enterprise. Thousands of tons of printer's ink have been spilled by thousands of writers frustratedly trying to make sense of the Republicans' Hispanic voter strategy and feeling defeated and humiliated when they cannot square the circle. But there is no circle to square: only the vain and vacant tangle of human irrationality, vanity, and self-delusion.

And yet, there remains something further to be said on the subject of the politics of immigration. When confronted by the will of the native majoritarian electorate of their country where it conflicts with the desires of the foreign-born nonelectorate, politicians are willing to risk the present solid support of the former for hypothetical future ballots cast by the latter. What their motives are in this matter, only their consciences can say for certain. As for the rest of us, we are at liberty to speculate. And we do.

—*Chilton Williamson, Jr.*

YASSER ARAFAT, the president of the Palestinian Authority, is dead. While he was alive, he was an obstacle to any fresh vision for peace in the Middle East. Vainglorious and shifty (he changed his mind about his place of birth thrice), he was unattractive as the "icon" of Palestinian aspirations. His ineffectiveness as an administrator was exceeded only by his insatiable avarice. As a negotiator, he was unable to close a deal, to make compromises, or to state his bottom-line position coherently and honestly. The best that can be said of Arafat is that, in all this, he was true to the Arab political tradition.

Born in 1929 as Rahman Abdul Rauf al-Qudwa al-Husseini, Yasser Arafat was the nephew of the grand mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, an ardent Nazi collaborator during World War II. This pedigree helped "Abu Ammar"—another pseudonym—to cofound Fatah (Victory), an underground organization for the liberation of Palestine that postulated the destruction of Israel, in 1958. A few years later, he became leader of the PLO and started building up the image of a leftist anti-imperialist revolutionary. In that role, Arafat peaked in 1974 when he addressed the U.N. General Assembly—the *kaffiyeh* (Palestinian headscarf), uniform, and holster included—and the world body passed a resolution condemning Zionism as a form of racism and supporting the right of Palestinians to self-determination.

Grandstanding before an assortment of Third World and communist despots may have suited Arafat's vanity, but it did nothing for the Palestinian cause, which went downhill over the ensuing two decades. Arafat's opposition to Israel depended for support on the pan-Arab sentiment, notably embodied in Egypt's Nasserism. Soon after the Arab defeat in October 1973, though, the pan-Arabist dream died when Anwar Sadat compromised with Israel. Arafat's Lebanese fiefdom, built on the ruins of a decent and multiconfessional polity, collapsed nine years later, shattered by Israel and Syria acting together in fact, if not in name. Arafat's subsequent exile in Tunisia was comfortable but degrading.

The United States and Israel resurrected Arafat as the lesser evil with the Oslo Accords of 1993. He did play along at first; once enthroned as a "head of state" in the West Bank and Gaza, however, Arafat tried to wear two incompatible hats. One day, he was president of the Palestinian Authority (PA), bringing "hard-line" dissidents to heel, indulging his vanity with kitschy head-of-state decorum, and amassing plundered international assistance funds. The next, as chairman of the PLO, he was abetting radicals and seeking to turn up the heat on Israel.

Then came Arafat's greatest blunder: his rejection of the deal Bill Clinton presented at Camp David in the closing months of his presidency. This event, more than any other, proves Arafat's ineptitude. Clinton was desperate to score a foreign-policy triumph that would atone for his many scan-

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dals, and the peace deal—while far from perfect—accurately reflected the limits of Israeli flexibility at that time.

Arafat's personal authority collapsed in the ensuing four years. By the time of his death, he was devoid of any power to direct the Palestinian-Israeli crisis, and of the imagination and courage to help resolve it. This has suited Sharon, who has been able to pursue his short-term objectives, the "wall of separation" and the consolidation of Israel's hold on the West Bank.

Like all autocrats, Arafat was loath to prepare an orderly succession to his allegedly indispensable self. Like most Arab leaders, he was determined to leave the seat of power only in a coffin.

The future of the peace process may depend on the outcome of the struggle for succession. The surprise announcement by Marwan Barghouti, a Palestinian hard-liner imprisoned in Israel, that he would run in the race for the presidency of the Palestinian Authority on January 9 has changed the political equation. He was convicted last month of involvement in the killings of five Israelis and sentenced to five life terms. Israel says that she will not release him regardless of the result, and Israeli leaders refer to him as a terrorist.

If Barghouti wins—which is a distinct possibility in view of his popularity with the young, radicalized Palestinian street—the search for peace would not be rekindled for a long time. The Israeli prime minister would retain a monopoly on deciding who is the acceptable interlocutor. In other words, Barghouti's candidacy may be secretly welcomed by Sharon and his foreign friends, who claim that it does not matter who Arafat's successor is because the Palestinians are simply impossible.

Barghouti's decision to run drew a reprove from the Fatah leadership, whose candidate is the former PA prime minister Mahmud Abbas (a.k.a. Abu Mazen). He is also the least bad option for the United States. American interests in the region demand peace and stability, which means a Palestinian state, which entails the existence of a Palestinian leadership that one can do business with. In the weeks ahead, Washington would be well advised to provide discrete support to Abbas, an aging moderate willing to settle for the two-state solution in line with President Bush's 2003 Road Map. But he can win the Palestinian presidency only if he is given public promises of speedy and tangible results that will alleviate the living conditions and economic prospects of ordinary Palestinians. Such promises demand Mr. Sharon's willing cooperation, which is unlikely, or else Mr. Bush's readiness to exert some serious pressure on him, which is long overdue.

—*Srdja Trifkovic*

THE CIA underwent several changes at the close of 2004, and the resignations of a number of high-ranking CIA officers in November, as well as the content of a memo by new CIA Director Porter Goss to agency employees, appear to confirm a claim by *Newsday* that the White House was planning a purge at the agency, targeting critics of the Iraq war.

The purge began with the resignations of clandestine service chief Stephen Kappes and his deputy, Michael Sulick, followed by Deputy CIA Director John McLaughlin. CIA staffers are reportedly bracing themselves for more resignations, disturbed by the high-handed behavior of Goss and his entourage. *Newsday*'s source, identified as "a former senior CIA official who maintains close ties to both the agency and the White House," claimed that the purge would be a direct response by the Bush administration to perceived disloyalty: "Goss was given instructions . . . to get rid of those . . . [CIA] leakers and liberal Democrats."

Goss, a Bush loyalist who headed a congressional intelligence-oversight committee and replaced George Tenet as CIA director, has been a fierce critic of the agency. Two other events appear to support the *Newsday* report: the resignation of Michael Scheuer, a 22-year agency veteran who once headed the task force assigned to track Osama bin Laden and the author of *Imperial Hubris: Why the West Is Losing the War on Terror*; and the content of a Goss memo to agency employees.

Scheuer's book, published anonymously, was vetted for classified information before publication and contains a common argument: that, under both the Clinton and the Bush administrations (which undermines the White House's claims of partisanship by agency critics), senior officials (Scheuer did not spare the agency itself) undermined attempts to capture or kill Bin Laden; and that the war in Iraq is a diversion from the anti-Bin Laden effort—in fact, it is a gift to Bin Laden, boosting his image across the Islamic world as well as terrorist organizations' recruiting efforts. Scheuer apparently resigned under pressure: Though he had been careful to report media contacts according to CIA ground rules, CNN reported that he had been threatened with "disciplinary action" by the new agency regime. One agency official subsequently said that "the word is out: The place is under lockdown."

A Goss memo to agency employees seemed to make clear the aim of the lockdown: "We support the administration and its policies in our work," Goss wrote. "[W]e do not identify with, support, or champion opposition to the administration or its policies." Though the memo stated that intelligence officers should "let the facts" speak to policymakers, it seems clear that Goss intended to chill dissent.

And dissent there had been. The Bush administration attempted to pressure CIA analysts to produce evidence of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and of connections between Iraq and the Al Qaeda network. When nothing concrete materialized, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his neoconservative allies set up the Office of Special Plans (OSP), a Pentagon office connected to a similar Israeli intelligence operation. (Both Rumsfeld deputy Douglas Feith and neoconservative hawk Richard Perle once served as advisors to Israeli Likud Party leaders.) The OSP became the pro-war clique's chief weapon in the intelligence battle, giving information of questionable reliability to the hawks, who, in turn, used that information to pressure CIA analysts.

The White House-CIA clash reached its climax in the flap over administration claims that Iraq had sought to purchase uranium in Nigeria. The dubious claim, based partly on forged documents, contradicted the findings of a CIA-sponsored mission to Nigeria by retired diplomat Joseph Wilson. When news of the Wilson mission became public, White House officials leaked to columnist Robert Novak the information that Valerie Plame, Wilson's wife, was a CIA operative. Her outing ended her career as a covert CIA operative and was arguably a federal offense, prompting a grand-jury investigation. Meanwhile, Rep. Porter Goss tried to downplay the Plame investigation, dismissing charges of a deliberate leak as an act of political retaliation against the CIA. Why wasn't Goss, a former CIA case officer, outraged at the exposure of an undercover agent? Hadn't the Bush administration complained about leaks, denouncing them as political sabotage? Subsequent reporting on the investigation seemed to indicate that the President

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knew of the plan to leak Plame's CIA affiliation and that his chief political advisor, Karl Rove, approved the leak.

What is most disturbing about the CIA "purge" affair is how it fits into the pattern of the Bush administration's (and its supporters') behavior, a pattern that sees dissent as disloyalty. Iraq-war hardliners, such as Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC), have defended Goss and attempted to blame the CIA for faulty pre-war intelligence (since no WMD's were found in Iraq and no credible connections between Iraq and Bin Laden have surfaced). McCain claimed that the CIA is "in some ways a rouge agency" that did not provide the President with "the necessary information" to "conduct the war on terror," while Graham stated that the CIA had "failed this country," an exact reversal of what appears to have happened. Who is "failing the country" by cooking intelligence to justify a war on dubious grounds? What office was, in fact, a "rogue agency" operating outside normal channels? Why have patriotic whistle-blowers such as Michael Scheuer been pushed out of the CIA, while neoconservative Likudniks remain in place? (Note that Scheuer pointed to unquestioning U.S. support of Israel as one of the main answers to the "Why do they hate us?" question.) And what did the President know, and when did he know it, regarding the Plame leak?

—*Allen Dennis*

ABORTION is on the rise in the United States—and has been since George W. Bush was first inaugurated President in January 2001. Current estimates of the number of abortions performed annually in America hover just above 1.3 million. What may astonish many of the "moral values" voters who reelected President Bush last November is that, from 1992 to 2000 (coinciding with President Clinton's eight years in office), abortions actually *declined* significantly, from 1.528 million to just over 1.1 million—the lowest rate since 1974.

Why has the number of abortions risen under a putatively pro-life president after declining under a pro-abortion one? Dr. Glen Harold Stassen, a Christian ethicist who is trained in statistical analysis, has examined abortion rates in 16 states that have published statistics for 2001 and 2002. Dr. Stassen found that "three of the 16 states had more marriages in 2002 than in 2001, and in those states abortion rates decreased. In the 16 states overall, there were 16,392 fewer marriages than the year before, and 7,869 more abortions." Marriage rates have a strong correlation to economic conditions; as Dr. Stassen points out, "As male unemployment increases, marriages fall and abortion rises."

Dr. Stassen concludes that "Economic policy and abortion are not separate issues; they form one moral imperative." With the continued loss of manufacturing jobs and the acceleration of outsourcing, the current "economic recovery" is proving rather hollow. The idea that women would abort their children for economic reasons is repulsive, of course, but it is a reality that pro-lifers need to address. A sound economic policy may save far more children than a partial-birth abortion ban or even pro-life Supreme Court nominations ever could.

There is little reason to believe that the Bush administration will make much progress on abortion over the next four years, and not simply because it intends to continue the failed economic policies of the past four. During Bush's first term, the federal government continued to subsidize Planned Parenthood, and some of the $15 billion that the President requested for AIDS relief in Africa went to organizations that promoted abortion.

President Bush's appointment of Alberto Gonzales as attorney general came as something of a surprise, since Gonzales had been widely expected to be Bush's first appointment to the Supreme Court. As a justice on the Texas Supreme Court, Gonzales had voted to gut a Texas parental-notification law. Some pro-lifers quietly rejoiced that Gonzales's appointment would keep him off of the Supreme Court, but, as attorney general, he will have a great deal of influence on Bush's expected three or four Supreme Court picks, and the *Wall Street Journal*, among others, is now lobbying for Miguel Estrada, a former clerk for Anthony Kennedy and the former assistant solicitor general in the Clinton administration who successfully argued that the RICO statute could be applied to pro-life protesters. (That ruling has since been overturned.)

And then, of course, there's the case of Pennsylvania Sen. Arlen Specter, a longtime foe of pro-lifers whom Bush endorsed in his primary battle against a pro-life opponent, even though the administration knew that Specter was next in line to chair the Senate Judiciary Committee. Specter was quoted the day after Bush's reelection as saying: "When you talk about judges who would change the right of a woman to choose, overturn Roe v. Wade, I think that is unlikely . . . The president is well aware of what happened, when a bunch of his nominees were sent up, with the filibuster . . . And I would expect the president to be mindful of the considerations which I am mentioning."

While evangelical leaders have pressured the administration to block Specter from taking the chairmanship, their appeals have fallen on deaf ears. Even if pro-lifers put the best spin on President Bush's claim that he has no litmus test for possible Supreme Court nominees, Arlen Specter will have one, and if he is allowed to take the chairmanship of the Senate Judiciary Committee, we can expect more justices like the four "giants of the Supreme Court" whom Specter has singled out for praise: Oliver Wendell Holmes, Louis Brandeis, Benjamin Cardozo, and Thurgood Marshall. How many of those "giants" would vote to overturn *Roe* v. *Wade*?

—*Scott P. Richert*

OBITER DICTA: Our first poet this month is **Charles Edward Eaton**, who lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Mr. Eaton is the author of four volumes of short stories; a novel, *A Lady of Pleasure*; and many collections of poetry, including *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, which includes a number of poems published in *Chronicles*. He is the recipient of the North Carolina Award for Literature, among other prizes, and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Literature degree by St. Andrews College.

Our second poet this month is **B.R. Strahan**, who teaches poetry at Georgetown University. The publisher of *Visions-International*, Mr. Strahan has had over 500 poems published in such journals as *America*, *Christian Century*, *Cross Currents*, the *Seattle Review*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, *First Things*, and the *Hollins Critic*. His latest book, *The Conjurer's Gallery*, was released in 2001 by Crosscultural Communications.

Our cover is a reprise of the July 1991 cover, by renowned artist **Warren Chappell**. The subtitle, *Twilight of Authority*, is in honor of late *Chronicles* contributor and friend Robert Nisbet, whose book of the same name inspired this issue.

Our interior art is provided by our designer, **Melanie Anderson**. Mrs. Anderson received her B.F.A. from Northern Illinois University.

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by Thomas Fleming

Love the One You're With

The reelection of George W. Bush has confirmed the leftist takeover of the Republican Party. While conservative Christians turned out in strength to defeat the party of "gay marriage," Richard Perle & Assoc. remains in charge of foreign policy, and Karl Rove and Arlen Specter will prevent any action on the moral agenda. Most movement conservatives will continue to support the President, while claiming to hold political and moral principles that are, in fact, anathema to the administration. More radical conservatives seem increasingly tempted to damn the GOP utterly, and, along with it, the system of government that they perceive as an alien regime.

This paradox is symptomatic of a deep confusion in the conservative mind. In almost the same breath, conservatives can say that they define themselves, first, as people who defend the moral, social, cultural, and political order, and, second, as opponents of the current moral, social, cultural, and political order that is the product of modernist revolutions. This contradiction, so familiar as to be a cliché, is frequently masked by attempts to resolve it in favor of one or the other principle. Neoconservatives, for example, embrace modernity with as much gusto as their physical and mental frailty permits, either praising or at least refusing to condemn divorce, abortion, blue jeans, MTV, and the welfare state. Libertarians, by contrast, while usually acceding to cultural modernism, proclaim themselves enemies of this and every regime that rises above animalistic anarchy. "Our enemy," for those who can read (or at least cite) Albert Jay Nock, is not merely this or that state, but "the state," and they deny moral legitimacy to any institution—from nation to church parish—that demands an allegiance that is not rooted in the rational self-interest of the individual.

Mainstream conservatives feel themselves helpless to confront the forces of moral and cultural dissolution. Unclear about their basic principles, they side with neoconservatives when their patriotic instincts are played upon by the so-called War on Terror; but, when their hatred of socialism, high taxes, or big government is aroused, they side with the libertarians and adopt their dangerous language of human rights and anarchy. Some of them have elevated confusion to the state of an ideology. They call it, or used to call it, *fusionism*, a term that justified them in revering, on the one hand, Samuel Johnson, Walter Scott, and T.S. Eliot and, on the other, John Locke, Adam Smith, and Milton Friedman as their heroes. They wonder why they never win, when they cannot make up their minds what victory would mean.

There is certainly a great deal to arouse conservative loathing, not only in the size and scope of government but in all the social and moral institutions that shape our lives as American citizens. The facts of our collapse are so familiar that they hardly bear repeating: the moral crisis as measured by statistics on divorce, abortion, drug use (including prescribed mood-altering drugs), and birthrates; the political crisis as expressed both by the ever-increasing share of our incomes confiscated by government and by the ever-decreasing quality of our leaders; the cultural crisis, as revealed not only in the idiotic obscenities of pop culture but in the deliberate subversion of all that is Western, Christian, and normal; and the religious crisis, manifest in the corruption of our clergy and the decay of Christian doctrine and the travesty of Christian liturgy performed in the clownish rituals of folk Masses and superchurches.

Conservatives can hardly be blamed if they find themselves occasionally wishing, with Voltaire, that the last televangelist died stuffing bribes down the throat of the last congressman, except that would leave the professors. Until *they* have been turned out of their ivory towers of hate and sent into the real world to starve—along with the public-school superintendents, principals, and "teachers"—there is no hope for this guilty nation. You ask: "Guilty of what?" For Christians, I remind you, suicide is a sin. Then, when all these agents of evil have perished, what then? *What then?* The great problem for all revolutions is the morning after.

Come the Revolution (or the Counterrevolution), cry the political agitators. Come the Millennium, cry the Gantrys and the flocks they fleece. Once we crack enough skulls, kill enough atheists or aristos—or bureaucrats or Freemasons or immigrants or polluting meat-eating businessmen—we can start over again, and it will be morning in America again and again and again. But the lust for wiping the slate clean always ends in dictatorship and concentration camps. The Greens are a good example of this mentality. Preserving the "environment" (dreadful word) is self-evidently good, from the conservative perspective, but what the Greens really have in mind is to scrape the earth clean of all human contamination. They are as savage as Lenin in their homicidal zeal.

Greens are leftists and have the usual revolutionary temperament of the left, but the temptation to run off into extremes, repudiating common sense and everyday life, is not restricted to Robespierre and John Brown. "Extremism in the pursuit of liberty is no vice," clucked Barry Goldwater, citing the words of his archkook speechwriter Karl Hess, who went from being a libertarian wacko to being a hippie wacko. (For years, I thought the line was written by Straussian wacko Harry Jaffa, who, in his bilious fulminations on the Civil War, has justified the death of 600,000 American soldiers for the sake of the ideas that Jaffa attributes—quite incorrectly—to Lincoln.)

So far, I have been dealing only with frauds and eccentrics—libertarian con men (as my old friend Murray Rothbard often described LP members); Straussian liars such as Jaffa or Allan Bloom or Leo the Great himself (*They lie on principle; in fact, lying is their only principle*); and the disloyal neoconmen who have taken advantage of the weaknesses in the conservative movement in order to turn it upside down, who talk so boldly about defending their country without ever really telling us what their country is.

We "traditionalists" (a term I reject because it implies that traditions *per se* are valuable) are not immune. People who know too much history, especially ancient and medieval history, often fall prey to nostalgia. From admiring the glory that was Greece or the faith of Dante, they soon turn to deploring the wisdom of

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Jefferson or the art of Shakespeare.

Conservative Catholics are particularly susceptible to the disease of nostalgia. If Henry VIII was an entirely evil man, does that mean we must turn entirely against America's British traditions? If the Declaration of Independence employs Lockean language, does that make the entire American experience an unmitigated evil? I have heard this kind of talk among Catholic traditionalists for years, but none of them seems to know the first thing about British or American history. America may not be the most splendid civilization the world has ever seen, but this is, after all, our country, and, even in its current sad condition, it deserves our loyalty, much as an alcoholic father deserves the loyalty and support of his children.

There is no man and certainly no age that deserves to be called good, and few ages (in our own history, at least) have been so bad that no one therein wrote a good song or bore witness to the truth. It is an old catholic principle that a Mass is not necessarily invalid because the minister is not a good man, and those who seek perfection in this world, even within the Church, are seeking for what can never be and, in the process, contemning the good things that may come their way. As the Italians say, *Il meglio è il nemico del buono*: Better is the enemy of good.

If the left is prone to utopian dreams and "angelism" (Maritain's word), conservatives are supposed to be hard-headed. They are supposed to understand the limits imposed by human nature and accept the limits imposed by historical circumstance. Wild talk about restoring the republic or seceding from the Union is like the third cognac after a long and boozy evening. It was inebriating at the time, but, when you "awoke and found the dawn was grey," you felt foolish and depressed. Even Tacitus, who despised most of the emperors and pined for the old republic, censures the folly of Stoic republicans who foolishly threw their careers (and lives) away insulting Vespasian, who was far from the worst ruler Rome would have to endure. Tilting at windmills is not a sign of heroic nobility; it is a sign of suicidal delusion, especially when the windmills are grinding the wheat that makes our bread.

For corrupt institutions may be worth defending. I do not like, for example, the PATRIOT Act; I deplore the abuses committed in the War on Drugs and in the various crusades to eliminate evil; I am well aware of the corruption and brutality of many policemen in America and despise the strutting bullies who lecture drivers who exceed the speed limit by six miles per hour or fail to put on seat belts. The police—local, state, national—are used to enforce all the wicked legislation of this regime: They are sent to protect abortionists and to arrest good parents who spank their children. Nonetheless, I do not think it is a good thing to undermine all respect for law and order. Even a bad cop may be enforcing a good law or, at least, a necessary system of law. At a minimum, the police, taken as a whole, are mercenaries we have hired to keep the savages at bay. Christians believe that the ruler's sword has been given him by God for the punishment of the wicked, and not in vain, as Paul tells us, does he hold it.

The police are the most offensive embodiment of the power of the state, and conservatives who hate what the state has become slip easily into the bad habit of condemning the state *per se*. We are not anarchists or even individualists, however. We know that man is a social animal and that the commonwealth is a natural institution that developed in response to the needs of our human nature. When a state goes bad, as Germany did under Hitler or Russia under Lenin and his successors, one may be free to resist the evil commandments of such a state or to join in a revolution, where it is feasible, to overthrow the regime, but even Nazi and communist states paved the roads and policed the streets. Overthrowing Hitler or Stalin would obviously have been a moral act—but not robbing or slandering or profiteering in the name of resistance. There is probably no time in the history of the world when it was a good idea to inflame weak minds in a general spirit of lawlessness and sedition. Civil disobedience, the tool of leftist revolution, is only a philosophical (and, thus, the worst) form of treason.

What I have said of the state is *a fortiori* truer of the Church. Catholics, especially, have a narrow line to walk. Many American bishops, for the most part, have betrayed both the faithful and the Church Herself, and it is right and necessary to rebut their false teachings and to condemn their misbehavior. Some ultratraditional Catholics have taken the further step of condemning the Church *per se*, however, and, in the extreme form of the argument, of denying legitimacy to this Pope and one or more of his predecessors. What they fail to realize is that they are adopting the tactics and attitude of their enemies. I constantly hear from the admirers of the Second Vatican Council that the Church had been all wet for many centuries and only now is fulfilling Her mission. As one traditionalist friend of mine likes to put it, "When did the Church cease to be the Church?" Alas, this has become a question that must be put to many traditionalists. This argument applies equally, *mutatis mutandis*, to most Protestant churches.

The difficult situation in which we find ourselves calls for the exercise of that moral diplomacy once known as casuistry. Conservatives must work hard to clarify their principles and to assert them as the foundation of every policy they propose and every institution they wish to reform. In correcting and admonishing the leaders of these institutions—the state, the Church, the schools—they must keep in mind the noble purpose and sometimes brilliant history of these institutions. What good do we do if we convince all of America that this state and the churches in it are so evil that they deserve our devoted hatred?

In my darkest moments, I sometimes imagine the United States as an occupied country. But what if it is? Only an evil man would wish to lead an army to devastate his once-native land. That was the crime of Oedipus' son Polynices, who lead the expedition of the *Seven Against Thebes* portrayed by Aeschylus. I would prefer to emulate the noble patriotism of Farinata degli Uberti, the leader of the Florentine Ghibellines, who, with their allies, defeated Guelf Florence at Montaperti. When the allies demanded the destruction of Florence, Farinata refused, and the force of his will was enough to save his city. If conservatives cannot love their country, even in its current sad state, as Farinata did, then they have become moral exiles, aliens in their own land. And, if they cannot love the country in which they live, they should go to live in a place that they can love. C

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by Paul Gottfried

Establishing the Worst

My young German friend Karl-Peter Schwarz, a political correspondent for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, sent me an essay last month that was earmarked for his newspaper, about an Italian Christian Democrat and nominee for the post of E.U. commissioner of justice, Rocco Buttiglione. In early October 2004, the Berlusconi government nominated Buttiglione as part of an executive list that was supposed to float through the assembly without incident. In a publicized appearance before the European Parliament, however, the 65-year-old nominee expressed moral reservations about homosexuality. As a believing Catholic and descendant of the Romans, Buttiglione could not quite rid himself of the notion that matrimony is about mothers and the maternal protection of offspring. The nominee let it be known that he had no intention to impose his belief on others and protested that, once confirmed as an E.U. official, he would enforce the laws of his ultramodern institution. As a Christian, he explained, he felt that, in a "multicultural society" properly understood, "one could believe that one is right and someone else is wrong but at the same time revere an erring human being as sacred." (Let us grant this counterfactual premise for the time being.)

Buttiglione's protestations did not suffice to keep critics off his back; and the European Union, guided by a plurality of Socialists and Greens, held back the list on which his name appeared in order to defeat his nomination. The dilatory tactic followed by E.U. President José Barroso, of delaying the confirmation vote by a few weeks until the storm had passed, did not work. Those parties situated left of right-center in the European Parliament gathered their forces, and, by mid-November, Buttiglione had agreed to withdraw his name from the list, which was then passed with a Hungarian former secret-police chief as the new commissar of energy.

Also driving this process were the bitter relations between the head of the Socialist caucus in the European Union, Martin Schulz, and Buttiglione's sponsor, Silvio Berlusconi. A typical German antifascist zealot, Schulz accused Berlusconi last summer of being a Mussolinian for trying to restrict Islamic immigration into Italy. Berlusconi shot back that Schulz would have done fine as a "concentration camp Kapo." Berlusconi's Teutonophobic outbursts were fully deserved. Indeed, it may be helpful to distinguish between traditional Europeans, who are necessarily outraged by the antifascist hysteria coming from a country that already produced one unfortunate example of ideological imperialism, and those antinationalist Germans who are hypocritically complaining about Berlusconi. What Schulz and other members of the German left are doing to liberty and community in their own country is monstrous.

Would Schulz and his leftist friends treat the Turks, whose membership in the European Union they have been advocating for months, as viciously as they have Christians? I doubt it, in view of the glaring fact that E.U. delegates are wooing into their antiseptically non-Christian superstate the present Islamicist-majority Turkish regime. Presumably, the Turkish delegation, once it arrives, would be permitted to talk about religious morality with more brutal honesty than their lapsed Christian counterparts. Non-Christian theocrats do not elicit horrified accusations of "fascism" from the usual suspects, who are always fitfully reaching out to the enemies of the West. After all, the *f*-word only applies to European and American Christians.

Do Buttiglione's statements, which caused the firestorm, reveal the embattled traditionalist defended in, among other conservative publications, the *Spectator* and *Junge Freiheit*? Are his the expressions of courageous conviction? Perhaps they may be more worthy of John Kerry and Geraldine Ferraro, who insist that, as Catholics, they find abortion "tragic" but would not inflict their politically incorrect faith on anyone else. In the face of the prevalent antifascist totalitarian climate, Buttiglione should have criticized unnatural sexual practices while underlining that his hands would be tied as an E.U. commissar. In all likelihood, the reaction of the anti-Nazi Nazis would have been equally hysterical whether or not the insensitive offender had been entirely forthcoming.

In an otherwise penetrating commentary, Karl-Peter Schwarz makes two questionable assumptions. First, he concludes "*auf die Verschulzung folgt die Verhaiderung Europas.*" By giving Schulz free rein, the powers that be ensure a widespread reaction on the other side that will favor right-wing populists like Jörg Haider (assuming that Haider is as dangerously extreme as Schulz). Such a reaction is only possible, however, if the institutional, social, and cultural environment sustains it. Otherwise, there will be no *Verhaiderung* but the application of an aphorism I learned from my late friend Murray Rothbard. "Contrary to what French communists believe, a politics of the worst does not lead to the triumph of the better but to the establishment of the worst." I can easily imagine the Kapos gaining ground in Western Europe before the harmful consequences of their jackboot indoctrination become apparent.

Second, Schwarz seems to believe that the European Union can only succeed by observing the "principle of ideological neutrality." Otherwise, it will run into conflict with the interests and values of the national communities that it claims to represent. But there is nothing the European Union is advocating ideologically that the English, French, Germans, Dutch, and Belgians have not already imposed on themselves. Secularism and antinationalism already prevail in the countries that are leading the European Union and clamoring for its "human rights" agenda. It is also hard to understand how such a union can be value-neutral, given its post-Christian moralistic rhetoric. Should we assume that the European Union has been or could be neutral in conflicts between feminists and antifeminists or between advocates of and skeptics about human rights? ·c

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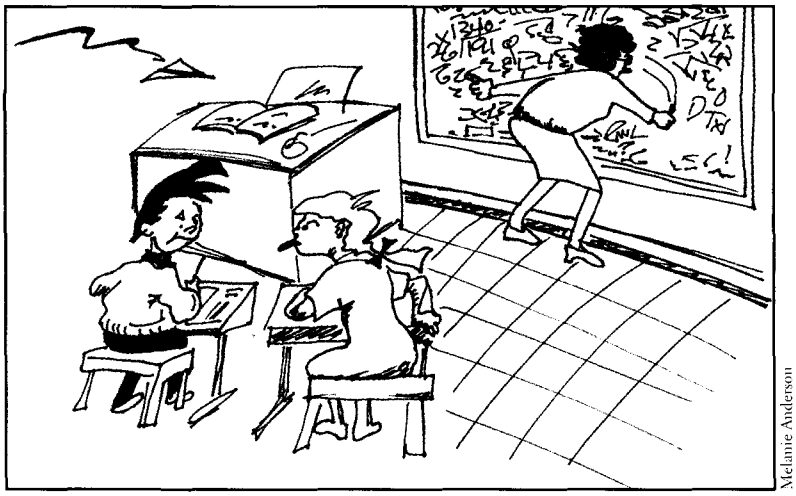
Education and Authority

Respect in the Marketplace

by Michael McMahon



I had taught in private schools for years, but I hesitated before entering the classroom to teach my first lesson in the state sector. I stopped a colleague in the corridor and asked him for advice. Should I expect the children to fall silent and stand behind their desks when I walked in? Thinking I was joking, he laughed. A few seconds later, I realized why.

I had been used to teaching in places where authority was sometimes challenged but always acknowledged; I had entered a world where it had to be fought for, and defended if won. No, the children did not stand up—or shut up, or even look up when I entered the room. Not until I had made a noise as loud as a pistol shot by banging a book on my desk did they even notice I was there. It was a long, hard struggle to win their respect, and I had to do it from a standing start. In English inner-city schools like that, teachers are not able to exercise authority by virtue of their office. They stand or fall—or, in most cases, stumble along—according to their personal ability alone.

I quickly discovered how little authority is enjoyed by the contemporary English state schoolteacher. On my second day, a 14-year-old girl was reading a glamour magazine under her desk during my class. I told her to put it away; she pretended to do so, but, when I looked a moment later, she was reading it again. So I walked up to her desk, picked up the magazine, opened the window behind her, and threw it out. It described a perfect parabola over the staff car park and landed on the playing field beyond.

The class fell silent before drawing one common and audible breath. I thought it expressed shock at her defiance, but they were breathing in to shout their outrage at what I had done.

"You can't do that! It's her private stuff!"

"You've no right to touch her things!"

"I'm gonna tell my mum about this!"

"You'll get done for this, sir!"

And "done" I was. A formal complaint was made to the head teacher, who called me in to tell me that I had no right to touch a child's property. The moment he said it, I knew that, in the culture that I had entered, authority would only ever be exercised against itself.

It is not hard to trace the origins of this rights-without-responsibilities absurdity: It dates from the libertarianism of the 1960's, which lived on in English schools for decades. The kids that were first poisoned by it are now grandparents. They passed on their disrespect of teachers to their children. The children they parented learned to disrespect everyone, including their parents.

Their rights, though, must be respected absolutely; and, if those rights conflict with those claimed by others, too bad. Duties are what other people owe to them. I did not enter into a discussion with the girl with the glamour mag; if I had, however, I now know how it would have gone. If I had said that I had the right to expect and enforce obedience, she would have said, "So what? You had no right to take my stuff."

Schools filled with children that think and act like this are uncomfortable places in which to teach. Many children would pay no attention at all to instructions addressed to the group in general; they would wait until I had finished explaining what to do and then demand to be told individually. It was, they believed, their right. Many of them came to school with nothing to write with; their attitude was that, if I wanted them to write anything, it was my duty to provide them with a pen. The custom was to supply pencils; at the end of the lesson, they were not taken to the next class but cast on the floor, frequently after being broken in two.

Michael McMahon writes from Norfolk, England.

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After a while, the kids behaved better for me; I won their trust because, despite their awfulness, I cared. I established a working relationship with almost all of them and even, perhaps, won their respect. But whatever respect they had for me was for me as an individual; I didn't play the "Because I am a teacher" card because it wasn't in the deck. I began to enjoy the challenge of liking them into submission. They were not used to it, but eventually it worked.

My career came to an end when the school was condemned as "failing" after a government inspection. I refused to accept the regime that was subsequently imposed upon the staff. The school was put into "special measures," a euphemism that might have been coined in 1930's Germany. It means punishing the staff by controlling their every act. Teachers were made to submit for approval a lesson plan for every lesson taught, broken down into five-minute sections. After delivering it, they were required to write up a full report. I wouldn't do it on any number of principles; I walked out of teaching, and that was that.

That was a failing school if ever there was one, and something most certainly had to be done. Unfortunately, the government's response to schools that are capsized by hordes of unbiddable children has not been to restore authority, which commands respect; it has been to employ authoritarianism, which inspires fear. And it isn't the children who are fearful. The fear is felt by frontline teachers, who are held to account if they cannot produce the targeted statistical outcome from their students. They are forced to behave like double-glazing salesmen, whose jobs depend on selling a minimum number of units per month. The salesman cannot afford to worry about what his customers want or need: His survival depends on persuading them to buy what he must sell. The teacher cannot afford to weigh up the needs of individual pupils: He keeps his job by making the required percentage of them achieve a grade C pass, because that is what the government demands. The borderline C/D pupils get all the attention; the E's that might get D's get none at all.

Now that teachers are paid according to their performance, that performance has to be measured against measurable targets. Encouraging respect for others—or respect for anything—does not produce a number that can be put in a box on a spreadsheet; coaching children to leap through graded examination hoops does. Successful teachers do not engage with the needs of their children; they turn their backs on them so that they can concentrate on satisfying the demands of their own managers.

Watching teachers watch their backs like this does not inspire children to respect authority. But then, contemporary English education isn't really about children at all; it is about producing statistics that justify government policies. The teacher's primary purpose is to make the government look good. As in every other aspect of life in Blair's New Britain, it is what things look like that counts.

What looks bad is a dehumanized educational process in which the teacher-pupil relationship has been destroyed. The countable result of that is that teachers quit. The government's response is not to admit that schools are now soulless certificate mills but to generate a publicity stunt that suggests that they are not. We now have an annual televised "Oscars-style" award ceremony with categories such as "Teacher of the Year," and . . . well, to be honest, I don't know what the other categories are, because I have never watched it. I don't know anyone who has. My wife is still a serving teacher and says that she has never heard anyone mention the show at school or anywhere else. I can tell you, though, that this year's overall winner was a man. I think. There was a photograph in all the papers, but I didn't really look at it. What matters, though, is that it was there, and a picture of a teacher celebrated as a personality is worth a thousand words—especially if those words include "performance indicator" or "target."

We have not arrived at this embarrassingly trashy vulgarity by accident. When Tony Blair was first elected, he promised to make education his priority, and, after seven years, we can see the result. Blair has dealt with education in the same way that Henry VIII dealt with the Church. In each case, the central issue was the same: authority. The king would not countenance any power that challenged his will and took over the institution that dared to do so. Blair could not tolerate the idea that schools and universities could be looked upon as founts of independent wisdom, so he has made them all answerable to his government.

As with Henry, Blair's arrogance has bred heresy. His *de facto* doctrine is that schools exist solely to prepare children for the world of work; the reward of education is a good salary. Man is fallen, so men fall for it. Cultural enrichment has been displaced by greed. The god of contemporary education is a false one, but its cult is attractive because the idol is covered in gold.

The whole educational world now kneels before it. The government's ongoing campaign to recruit teachers focuses on their earning power. Newspaper advertisements use business-world shorthand: Run a school full of eager-eyed youngsters like the one in the picture, and you can earn "80k." The crude little kappa says it all. Come on in, Mr. Senior Executive—oh, and goodbye, Mr. Chips. Good heavens! Are you still here?

Well, no, actually. Those advertisements keep running because teachers keep running away. Most new recruits do not stay more than four or five years. They cannot stand the pressures of performance management, which is execspeak for managing by bullying. Teachers now enjoy all the professional independence of the call-center operative. No wonder they burn out and bail out fast.

And yet the word *professional* is dropped into every other managerial sentence. Heads exhort wavering staff to adopt a "professional" approach and praise compliant colleagues for their "professionalism." The usage is as dishonest as it is absurd. To use *professional* as a synonym for *compliant* is perverse: Professionals, by definition, are accepted by society as independent practitioners of expertise.

This, then, is the reason that respect for authority is no longer found in schools: Authority is not there to be respected; it is somewhere else. Practically, it is in the ministry of education; philosophically, it is where the money god lives: nowhere and everywhere. It is also in the wallets of those with two million pounds to spare, because, for that sum—less, if you haggle—you can now sponsor a new school, appoint the majority of its governors, determine its ethos, and create its curriculum. Having suffocated the existing school system under a pillow held down by bureaucrats, the government is setting up new schools called academies. There are plans for 200 to be up and running or in the pipeline by 2010, of which 60 will be in London. So far, 12 have opened, and a further 31 are in development.

It more interesting than uplifting to contemplate the spon-

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sors that have put their money on the table to propagate their ethos. The chairman of a venture capitalist company has sponsored the London Academy in Barnet, which specializes in "business and IT." A property company has stumped up for the Thamesmead Community College, with the more modest ambition of specializing in "business." The West London Academy is sponsored by Alec Reed, founder and chairman of Reed Executive. His school specializes in "enterprise" and "sports." Stockley Park Academy, which specializes in "science and technology," is backed by a disparate bunch including a stockbroker, the computer giant Cisco, the British Airports Authority, and the games manufacturer Hasbro. What kind of ethos that combination might produce is anybody's guess. Perhaps it is only fully expressed on sports day, at an all-school online game of Monopoly with extra squares for Heathrow, Stansted, and Gatwick.

The circle is complete: Schools exist to create moneymakers, so who better than moneymakers to create schools? Their choice of "specialisms" says it all. The education department keeps a running tally of planned academies, and you won't find any of them focusing on classical languages or medieval literature. You don't make money out of Middle English poetry, and making money is what education is now all about.

It is not only the new academies that specialize. Over 2000 ordinary English schools have already achieved "specialist" status and the funding that follows it. Governing bodies that cook up a scheme to commit themselves to the pursuit of a particular excellence and persuade a private sponsor to pay £50,000 into the school funds win a one-off government grant of £100,000 and an extra £123 per pupil over a four-year period. And funding is what all of this is really about. My own children went first to a school that specialized in technology, and then to a school that specialized in humanities. It was the same school. It got the grant twice.

In any case, the idea of filling the country with specialist secondary schools is simply stupid. There have long been schools for children blessed with a prodigious talent for acting, dance, or music; there are not many such institutions, because such gifts are exceptional. Making "specialist" schools the norm is a nonsense, but it is a nonsense to which the current government is committed.

The reason for its commitment is that the existence of specialist schools gives the impression that there is choice. The impression is false. If a child keen on computers wants to go to a school that specializes in computing, he can indeed do so—provided there is one nearby. Few people have more than one school within easy traveling distance. Only those who can afford to move their homes have a real choice—and the better the local school, the higher the price of the house.

This is what happens when moneymaking is the end and purpose of education: Schools become the servants of materialism. Education is no longer a gift to be shared but a commodity to be bought and sold. Schoolchildren are now consumers, and consumers are defined not by their responsibilities but by their rights. Respect for the traditional values of education has been thrown out as certainly as I once cast that girl's magazine through the window. I now know my confidence was misplaced. The lesson taught in schools today is that the world is a marketplace, and, in a marketplace, the only authority worth respecting is cash. ‹c›

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Honor to Whom Honor

Below Reproach

by Harold O.J. Brown

"Render to all what is due them," writes Saint Paul, "Tax to whom tax is due, custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor" (Romans 13:7, NASB). When a zealous Christian offered to help Mark Twain understand the difficult things in the Bible, Twain said something like this: "It is not the things I don't understand that bother me, but those that I do understand." In the United States of the 21st century, we understand tax only too well, alas, and we understand custom—or at least we used to in the days before globalization. We certainly understand fear: fear of terrorists, on the one hand, and, less plausibly, of right-wing Christian extremists, on the other. But honor? Probably Twain understood that particular concept, but it seems to have dropped out of our minds even as it has almost disappeared from our vocabulary.

In earlier ages, honor was an item so precious to men that many a man challenged an opponent who had insulted him even when he knew his adversary to be a better swordsman or pistol shot. For many, "Death before dishonor" was not an empty slogan but an inflexible rule of life—and death. Better to die on the field of honor than to live without honor. From a Christian point of view, dueling with deadly weapons has always been wrong, but honor was so highly prized that many Christians fought anyway, hoping to be forgiven afterward.

Today, honor as an ideal has almost vanished. When President Clinton's trysts with Monica Lewinsky first became a national or even worldwide sensation, I, for a few days, expected him to slink out of sight. If a man of honor had made a speech honoring Strom Thurmond on his 100th birthday and was sharply criticized by the politically correct for it, he would have preserved his honor by responding, "I have honored an old friend; if you are offended, that is your problem." Instead, Sen. Trent Lott abased himself, offering concessions to his detractors in an effort to preserve his status as Senate majority leader. Perhaps it was this self-humiliation, with its attendant loss of honor, that cost him the honorable post that he sought thereby to keep.

Political leaders, from town mayors to the president, have the prefix *Honorable* attached to their names. It once meant something, for, in theory at least, no one could rise to such eminence without being a man of personal honor. For many today, it means little, and with some, it must be seen as mocking. Would that it were not so. Would that the men and women thus called *honorable* felt themselves bound by the title to speak and act honorably and, if challenged, to fight for their honor—perhaps not with swords and pistols but with all the tools that unbloody rhetoric could supply.

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The other title that once carried value and is now often seen as mocking is *reverend*. Not so long ago, it led those who bore it to act well and others to expect it of them. Florida drivers' licenses used to identify the bearer's profession—in my case, clergyman. When a highway patrolman stopped me for speeding (only moderately, be it said), he read "clergyman" and let me off with a warning: "Go and sin no more." At the time, that was a witticism, for it was assumed that a minister in general avoided sinning even more scrupulously than ordinary Christians did. In his admonition to Timothy, Saint Paul tells him that a bishop (*episkopos*, overseer) must be "above reproach" (I Timothy 3:2). No man is totally above reproach, but the bishop was expected to make the effort; he was "to be the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, hospitable, able to teach, not given to much wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money." Surely, anyone exhibiting all or even most of those qualities is to be revered, and with that reverence should come authority.

Those who are admired are easy to hear and easy to follow.

Political philosopher Hannah Arendt defines *authority* as the ability to elicit voluntary obedience. The man of honor is able to inspire followers in matters of civic life and conflict; the man who is justly called reverend will inspire imitators in matters of the spirit and faith. Today, as all-too-many honorables are without honor, too many reverends deserve no reverence. The political leader who lacks authority still has power that he can call upon to demand obedience, but the spiritual leader who deserves no reverence lacks power to compel and will have few followers. When many of those called reverend fail to live up to the Apostle's instructions, the Church Herself loses respect and authority. Among Saint Paul's standards, the one most frequently violated in Protestant circles is "free from the love of money." Roman Catholics are used to having archbishops live in palaces, but, when a Protestant evangelist is seen to be using "the Lord's money" as his own, it not only shatters respect for him but redounds to the harm of the Church and Her ministers in general.

In the mid 19th century, the Bernese pastor Jeremias Gotthelf (1797-1864) wrote, "Current politics are not directed only against the church, but at base against Christianity." The disease that was beginning in Europe in the 19th century has taken on epidemic proportions there today, and here in the United States as well. The churches are under assault; Christianity itself is under assault. Viewed by the U.S. Supreme Court and found constitutionally wanting, Christianity sees both its strict and its lovable symbols (the Commandments and Manger scenes) banished from public view, its sacred texts and prayers banished from schools. Even more striking, the moral standards that have been with most of the Western world and, in spirit at least, with most of the rest of the world for centuries

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have become unutterable, being denounced as "intolerant," "judgmental," even "hate-filled."

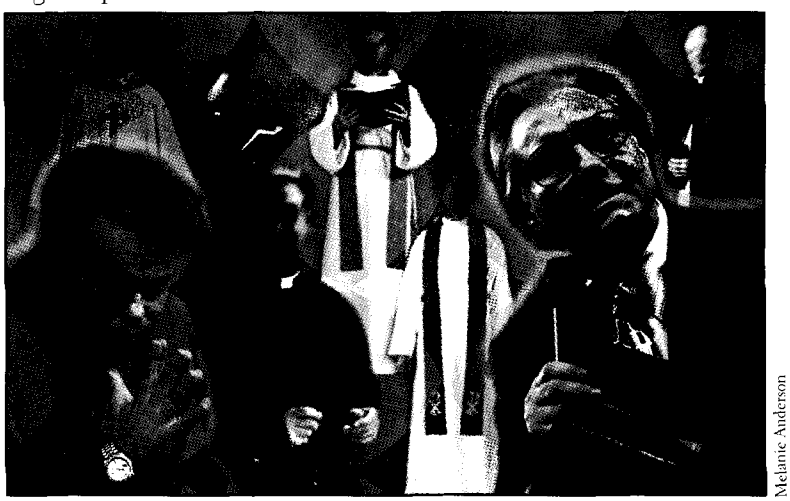
The Church is under terrific pressure from without, both from courts and governmental bodies and from the general culture. Taken as a whole, She is also constantly being sapped by treachery from within—by unorthodox, anti-Christian tendencies in doctrine and in life. Protestantism in the United States flows in many diverse streams. Some bodies, such as the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Presbyterian Church in America, and the Anglican Mission in America, avoid contamination with doctrinal errors and moral deviancy, but the respect that they enjoy and the reverence in which their ministers are held is contaminated and diminished by their proximity to similarly named groups less committed to older standards of faith and morals. The Episcopal Church in America suffers from both doctrinal and moral erosion; a man (John Shelby Spong) who denies the truth of the bodily Resurrection of Christ can be a bishop, and so can one who abandons his wife to cohabit with a male paramour (V. Eugene Robinson). The presence in the Episcopal House of Bishops of someone who denies the Resurrection and of someone who breaks the marriage covenant to embrace a life *contra naturam* is trumpeted in the media, more often with glee than with reproach.

It is true that the most egregious examples of moral failings in Protestantism, both financial and sexual, have been seen in representatives of independent ministries, such as television evangelists. The most eminent of all American mass evangelists, the Rev. Billy Graham, however, is one whose consistent teaching and modest lifestyle really deserve the title "reverend." Sadly, but naturally enough given the nature of the media, very little is said about his traditional doctrine or his financial integrity because they are not newsworthy, as that is the way he is supposed to believe and live. By contrast, the deviations of a Jim Bakker or a Jimmy Swaggart are broadcast all over America and the world. Thus, the more truly reverend individuals and fellowships also lose respect in the eyes of the general public.

This condition is virtually irremediable, because, between the fragmentation of the Christian community and the antagonism of most of the media, it has become virtually impossible for a church to discipline even the most egregious doctrinal or moral deviations. From the earliest days, Christian communities have been troubled with such problems, and, from the beginning, they have developed procedures to rid themselves of them and the persons causing them. Today, many church bodies have abandoned discipline altogether—sometimes because they lack the necessary convictions; sometimes because they are too timid to risk the disapproval of the media and the smirks of the unbelieving public. When a church is true to her confessions and foundational principles and seeks to discipline a minister or other officer, she will be called tyrannical, judgmental, obsolete, and probably overweight to boot. The substantial numbers of fellowships and of individual members who seek to remain true to their calling generally go unreported; and, when they are mentioned, they are treated as though they are in the same bucket with the doctrinally and morally deviant.

One rotten apple can ruin a barrel, and many good apples will not prevent it.

The loss of reverence for those with the title of reverend has gone so far that many clergy use it unwillingly, if at all. Today, it is probably fortunate that drivers' licenses no longer identify the profession of the driver. If they did, patrolmen might be tempted to suspect a speeding clergyman of being on the way to an illicit sexual tryst with a call girl (or minor boy). No matter how many ministers, priests, superintendents, and bishops live unremarkably sober and righteous lives, the widely reported immorality of a few gives license to the general public to ignore the preaching of the many. When a letter to a newspaper is identified as being from a "reverend" of any kind, instead of carrying authority with readers, it is likely to be scrutinized for eccentric doctrines that will free readers from the obligation to believe or for evidence of the "judgmentalism" that automatically cancels any moral impact that the writer might hope to have.



Melanie Anderson

In countries such as Germany and Switzerland, where the churches are partly supported by the state, there is far less possibility for priests and ministers to become rich through their ministries, and, consequently, their scandals, like much of their other entertainment, are imported from America. In Europe, the ministry and the churches suffer more from being ignored and treated as irrelevant, and the clergy are regarded more as expensive nuisances than as spiritual leaders who should be respected and followed. The title used for Roman Catholic priests in Austria, *Hochwürden* (High Dignities), is now perceived so much as a joke that few priests like to hear it used.

The zeal with which the media report transgressions by the clergy reached a high point in the exposure, denunciation, and even, one might say, celebration of the sexual abuse of children, mostly boys, and of homosexual adventures by Roman Catholic priests. Although the number of priests guilty of sexual abuse of minors represents a tiny segment of the total Catholic clergy, the shadow that it cast on priests made many reluctant to appear in public in clerical garb. As Pitirim Sorokin pointed out in *The Crisis of Our Age* (and I repeated in *The Sensate Culture*), the modern world has made a game of ridiculing and deriding, with or without real cause, those figures who, in past centuries, could be held up as ideals, from government leaders to Catholic priests. This is a variety of what Prof. Hans Millendorfer called societal AIDS. In medical AIDS, the virus destroys the T-4 helper cells that identify the aggressors so that the body's defense mechanisms can attack them and prevent them from killing the body. In societal AIDS, the media, the entertainment world, and much of the academic community destroy the possibility that the clergy and religious leaders can be helper cells to identify the persons and forces that are killing society. c

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America's Unthinking Military

Servants of the Imperium

by Robert D. Hickson

It was in the autumn of 1960, after our Plebe Summer and the test of "Beast Barracks," that I first heard about the revisions that the West Point academic curriculum had recently undergone, which would be experimentally applied to our incoming class of some 800 men. Colonel Lincoln's Social Science Department, as it was presented to us, was to be much more influential, and more deeply formative than before, upon the education of officers; and there were to be several more classes in military psychology, sociology, and leadership and fewer classes in strategic military history and concrete military biography. The long-standing and ongoing process of replacing the humanities with the academic and applied social sciences would continue and, as we were told, increase.

I was 17 and had little idea of the implications of these curricular revisions—the underlying "logic of scientific discovery," the growing "soft tyranny" of the social sciences and their subtly relativizing "sociology of knowledge" (in the words of German sociologist Karl Mannheim). I do remember reading two mandatory books, however: Samuel Huntington's *The Soldier and the State* and Morris Janowitz's *The Professional Soldier*. Both were to help form, we were told, the proper kind of officer that was needed in "modern democratic society."

Janowitz was rooted in neo-Marxist "Critical Theory," first propagated by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno at the Institute for Social Research of the University of Frankfurt in Germany. This "Frankfurt School" of Marxist-Freudian thought—indeed, a "well-armed ideology"—was active in conducting various "Studies in Prejudice" and quite intensely concerned about the dangers of the "Authoritarian Personality," especially because this character-type supposedly tended toward fascism and antisemitism. "Critical Theory" claimed to unmask "antidemocratic tendencies" in traditional military institutions and their more autocratic cultures (especially because of the recent history of Germany) but also in the traditional, well-rooted religious institutions of the West—Christian institutions, in general, and the culture of the Catholic Church, most specifically.

The Frankfurt School theorists and activists claimed to want to produce the "Democratic Personality"—although they had originally (and more revealingly) called it the "Revolutionary Personality." This purportedly "Democratic Personality" would be a fitting replacement for the inordinately prejudiced and latently dangerous "Authoritarian Personality," because the "Authoritarian Personality" allegedly conduced to the disorder and illness of antisemitism.

Critical Theory would surface not only in the writings of Wilhelm Reich and Herbert Marcuse but in the antiauthoritarian psychology of Erich Fromm. At the time (1960), Morris Janowitz was a sociologist at the University of Chicago, and he wanted to form a "new kind of military professionalism" and a new kind of military officer: one who would be a "suitable" instrument to serve those who are truly "governing a modern democracy." These last few words in quotation marks were actually taken from a recent essay by Irving Kristol, a former Trotskyite, who has, for some years, been promoting the "Emerging American Imperium," first in the *Wall Street Journal* in the mid-1990's.

In "The Neoconservative Persuasion" (the *Weekly Standard*, August 25, 2003), Irving Kristol echoes the long-range "re-education and cultural project" of the Frankfurt School:

> The historical task and political purpose of neoconservatism would seem to be this: to convert the Republican party, and American conservatism in general, against their respective wills, into a new kind of conservative politics suitable to governing a modern democracy.

Kristol goes on to argue that, "like the Soviet Union of yesteryear," the "United States of today" has "an identity that is ideological." Therefore, in addition to "more material concerns" and "complicated geopolitical calculations of national interest," the United States, says Kristol, "inevitably" has "ideological interests," and "that is why we feel it necessary to defend Israel today, when its survival is threatened." What Kristol seems to be arguing explicitly is that the Republican Party, the conservative movement, and all the institutions of the U.S. government—including the military—must be reshaped to serve the interests of an ideological foreign policy that includes protection of the Jewish state.

American officers of an earlier generation would have found Kristol's prescriptions alarming; today, however, after our antiauthoritarian reeducation in America's new "tolerant" "democratic military culture," no active-duty military officer would be permitted to express any moral reservations he might have about the "ideological mission" that has been assigned him, whether for the protection of Israel or for the further expansion of the "emerging American imperium."

It is not clear that any general officer or flag officer today could even make a strategic argument that "ideological interests" and permanent missions for America actually undermine true U.S. national interests and the common good. And, if any younger military officers were openly, or even privately, to make such critical arguments or were known to hold such views, they would probably be weeded out before they could become general or flag officers. Nonetheless, the American military officer, in his commissioning oath, still accepts a high

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moral obligation when he solemnly swears to defend the Constitution of the United States "against all enemies, foreign and domestic."

Therefore, from the vantage point of the "Emerging American Imperium" in 2004, and in light of our seemingly intimidated military culture, we may now better consider the strategic, longer-range cultural project of antiauthoritarian reeducation, which was gradually implemented by way of a reformed "military sociology and psychology." This project was, in fact, slowly implemented, even back in 1960 during the Cold War, and intended to make the "updated" and "progressive" military officer more "suitable" and docile for helping his "civilian superiors" in "governing a modern democracy."

In Antonio Gramsci's terms, a new "cultural hegemony" has been attained, replacing an older, traditional military and political culture with a new ethos and orientation. While the United States was fighting the Cold War against the more conspicuous revolutionary socialism of the Soviet Union and Red China, the culture was being quietly, indirectly, and "dialectically" captured. Now, we may soberly ask the question: To what extent were we cadets being prepared, even back in 1960, to be compliant officers in a "modern imperial democracy" or even to serve as a new kind of praetorian guard for our new elites and the proconsuls they send out to administer the provinces of their empire?

Samuel Huntington's *The Soldier and the State*, the second mandatory book, also promoted the ethos of an unquestioningly obedient, properly subordinated, and docile military officer as a compliant instrument in the service of a modern state and "democratic society." Huntington's concept of "civil-military relations" clearly implied that there was not to be an intellectual or strategic culture in the U.S. military, and certainly nothing resembling the German General Staff concept of well-educated, strategic-minded, and far-sighted thinking officers, who would be not only indispensable senior staff officers but field commanders possessing the high qualities of moral and intellectual leadership.

During the early 1970's, when I studied military history under the Austrian-American professor Theodore Ropp at Duke University, I realized that this great teacher and scholar understood not only battlefield military history but the relation of "war and society" and the subtle influence of war on larger civilizations and cultures. Professor Ropp, who taught many West Point officers in graduate school, cultivated and disciplined the minds of his eager and deep-thinking students to take the longer view of various and profoundly differentiated military cultures. He illuminated these traditions by way of contrasts and a finely nuanced comparative cultural history of long-standing military institutions, which included their specific martial effects on civilization as a whole.

Another important influence in my deeper education was Col. Sam V. Wilson, the director of studies at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in 1969-1970 and during the Vietnam War. Colonel Wilson was a deep-thinking military officer, especially in the field of irregular warfare and strategic "special operations." He, too, made me realize, though in an incipient way, the deeper strategic, moral, and cultural factors in the waging of modern war. West Point, I then realized, had ill prepared us to take this longer, truly strategic view of military culture and history and war.

I have witnessed how little intellectual and moral resistance there is within the military today against our creeping and technocratic neopraetorianism in support of our regional military proconsuls and their civilian masters (both inside and outside of the government). Our military culture is altogether inattentive to any unconstitutional abuses of power, and to our myopically nonstrategic and thoroughly irrational involvement in unjust aggressive wars, such as the current war against Iraq, while we are overextended throughout the world and "strutting to our confusion."

Melanie Anderson

Properly conceived and patiently conducted, however, "cultural and strategic intelligence" illuminates the moral, religious, and cultural factors of foreign strategy and grand strategy. It further reveals another country's own strategic culture, as well as its political culture. For example, in the case of China, such an approach makes one more sensitive to Chinese perceptions of her own vulnerable geography and her important "strategic thresholds" and, therefore, her historical reluctance to have a large "blue-water" navy.

Unfortunately, the American military culture was to be influenced, instead, by John Dewey's pragmatic education, in combination with the Frankfurt School's Critical Theory. Our traditional military culture was to be uprooted from its Christian moorings and more and more secularized and paganized. This transformed military culture is now very conspicuously acquiescent to its neo-Machiavellian civilian masters and mentors (such as Michael Ledeen), in unthinking support of the Emerging American Imperium and of the grand strategy of the "Greater Israel" throughout the world. Our military officers no longer know or reflect on the criteria and standards of just-war theory, the tradition of Western Christian civilization. It is now their usual orientation and preference to think and speak in terms of vague and unspecified preemptive wars, or wars of "anticipatory self-defense," which is often Orwellian Newspeak for a war of aggression, the only specific offense for which the German officers were brought to trial at Nuremberg in 1945.

Sine auctoritate nulla vita—without authority there is no life; but the deeper challenge for us today on many fronts is: How does one resist the corruptions of authority without thereby subverting the principle of authority? c

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Government: Good or Bad? Big or Little?

Reframing the Debate

by Thomas Storck

Toward the beginning of *De Caelo* (*On the Heavens*), Aristotle makes the well-known remark that "the least initial deviation from the truth is multiplied later a thousandfold"—or, as it is sometimes phrased, "a small error in the beginning leads to a large error later on." We can easily see that this is true, whether in immediately practical operations or, more importantly, in intellectual investigations. If our first principles are not right, how can the rest of our reasoning be correct? This is true concerning our thinking about government. Is government a necessary evil? A necessary good? Is that government best which governs least? In thinking about these questions, it is good not only to begin at the beginning but to begin with the right questions and their correct answers.

If government were a necessary evil, one reason for this might be that it was something that would not exist had man not sinned. Christians believe that God originally created one man and one woman whose nature was untouched by evil and who were given special gifts to perfect that nature, but who were then tempted by the Devil and sinned. Because of Original Sin, all their descendants lost those extraordinary gifts, although man's basic nature remains good, albeit wounded. Had Adam and Eve never sinned, and had they begotten children in the state of innocence, would there have been a need for government? To some, this may seem like a useless question, as removed from reality as to ask what lunar landings would be like if the Moon were made of green cheese. However, this question reveals something about the place of government among men. If we answer it the wrong way, we will commit the small error at the beginning of our inquiry which leads to a big error later on.

Thomas Aquinas proposes to himself this very question. In his *Summa Theologiae* (I:96:4), he asks whether there would be subordination of man to man in the state of innocence. Yes, he answers very clearly. Although there would not have been the domination characteristic of the slave (*servus*), who is "ordered to another," there would still have been the kind of subjection proper to the free man, when someone directs him to his own good or to the common good. And the reasons given by Saint Thomas for this are two: First, because man is "naturally a social animal," and "social life cannot exist unless someone presides who aims at the common good"; and second, because it would be unfitting for someone to have "supereminence in knowledge or justice" unless he could use this supereminence for the good of others. In other words, according to Saint Thomas, had Original Sin never entered the world, we would still have had a sort of government, one that did not need to punish anyone but was still there to coordinate and direct our common projects toward the public good. Adam and Eve, after all, were not omniscient. If our hypothetical unfallen brothers had wanted to build a road or a dam or a bridge, they would still have needed to put it in this place rather than that, and someone would have had to make the final decision as to where.

By his answer, Saint Thomas was already guarding us against many wrong conclusions that we might reach. One of them is the notion that government is a necessary evil. Government, on the contrary, is a necessary good and has a natural role to play in man's affairs; as we consider the question of the proper size and activity of government, we must keep this truth in mind.

If government is a necessary good, the question of the size and responsibility of government should be approached in the spirit, not of trying to see how small we can make it, nor how large, but of calmly looking at those tasks that man can accomplish only or best *via* government, and setting government's proper bounds in response to man's nature and needs. It would be amusing if those who tell us that that government is best which governs least, having placed an emergency call to the police, got a recording that simply said: "The police department has been abolished, because that government governs best which governs least." On the other hand, we find that those who call themselves liberals seem to belong to the One Problem/One Agency school. If there is a social problem of any sort, then there obviously is a need for a government agency to solve it, or at least to try to solve it. Both the "biggest is best" and the "smallest is best" philosophies are wrong, however.

If there is some social need that we do not think appropriate for direct governmental action, what alternatives do we have? Often, in the Anglo-American political tradition, we are presented with only three alternatives: direct government control, private charity, or some kind of market-based approach. This is by no means an adequate enumeration of all possible approaches, for we must consider the principle of subsidiarity, first enunciated by Pope Pius XI in his 1931 encyclical, *Quadragesimo anno*. Subsidiarity holds that

> it is a fundamental principle of social philosophy, fixed and unchangeable, that one should not withdraw from individuals and commit to the community what they can accomplish by their own enterprise and industry. So, too, it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and a disturbance of right order, to transfer to the larger and higher collectivity functions which can be performed and provided for by lesser and subordinate bodies. Inasmuch as every social activity should, by its very nature, prove a help to members of the body social,

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Thomas Storck's latest book is Christendom and the West: Essays on Culture, Society and History *(Four Faces Press).*

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it should never destroy or absorb them.

Now, this principle is often misunderstood and misapplied. Some seem to think, for example, that it is calling for matters to be committed as often as possible to for-profit groups or private charity. The "lesser and subordinate bodies" that the Pope speaks of, however, are not necessarily purely private, let along for-profit. Nor are they necessarily devoid of real authority. Since, later on in this same encyclical, Pope Pius strongly urges the reestablishment of something like the medieval guilds, we can assume that he is not opposed to the assumption of real authority for the common good by some of these "lesser and subordinate bodies."

In the political traditions common in English-speaking countries, this sort of arrangement would probably be called *delegation* of governmental authority to nongovernmental bodies. Sometimes it is dismissed as "corporatism." But just because we have not had much recent experience with such arrangements is no reason that we should not consider them. The notion of an either/or—that a matter either belongs to the state authorities or is entirely private—often hampers us from pursuing sensible solutions. Moreover, one steeped in a political philosophy closer to Aristotle and Aquinas might argue that this is not a question of *delegation* of authority at all. Rather, certain forms of authority necessary for the common good naturally lodge themselves at different levels of the social body, and, without taking away from the supreme authority its necessary task of coordinating the pursuit of the common good, certain lower bodies are *ipso facto* the proper places for some necessary functions to be placed. They do not derive their powers from the central government; they derive their powers from the nature of the body politic, subject only to the state authorities preventing abuses. Just as the authority of the father of a family does not come from the state, yet parents obviously fulfill an important function that has numerous public consequences, so it might well be with other entities.

Today, we are faced with an often bitter battle over the nature of government's role in society. Rarely is the question debated in the abstract; instead, each separate issue—healthcare, minimum wages, workplace protection—is approached separately. Generally, those who call themselves the left or the right approach these issues from their own set of assumptions, often not clearly understood or articulated. If we could begin to go beyond this usually silly impasse—first, by asking fundamental questions in the abstract about government's role; then, by positing other kinds of entities that might be created or formalized to address our manifold problems—we might be able to make some progress beyond our current mess. At least we might have a more interesting discussion than the one we have now. c

The Marble

by Charles Edward Eaton

Today this is an image that I own,
A blue and white marble saved from boyhood.
No one else possibly could
Make a personal story from this stone.

All these years travelling through the brain,
It might have caused a thrombus
If it had not kept on rolling, and thus
Did not pause long enough to give a sudden pain.

Ostensibly inert, it had such speed, not a trace
Blocked the arteries of thought—
Was it freedom that it sought,
Streaked blue and white like earth seen from space?

Don't look too long, respect the limits—
Something today makes the marble move,
Something in it wants to rove:
The mind allows perhaps fifteen minutes.

Other images will roll all day—
The brain, indulgent of overkill,
Lets the marble have its will:
Keep all the marbles that you can, before they go their way.

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First Prize, Second Hand, Third Rate

The Award Goes to . . .

by James O. Tate

With difficulty, in a diminished capacity, or perhaps with an alienated attitude because I was watching good old Benny Hill reruns on the BBC America channel at the time, I have become somehow dimly aware that prizes have been awarded to someone for something—*but not to the late Benny Hill*. Yes, the Powers, always clueless, have been running around strewing honors left and left, with their usual lack of touch and their customary excess of agenda. Now, what was it I obscurely gleaned through all the impudent suggestions of those Hill-induced saxophone riffs? What glimpsed I through the dark backward and abysm of time?

Well, I'll tell you one thing: The mind-numbing predictability of the Nobel Prize in Literature this year could only remind me that I'd rather have a free bottle in front of me than the prefrontal lobotomy represented by Elfriede Jelinek of Austria, author of *Bambiland*, *Lust*, *The Piano Teacher*, and *Women as Lovers*, and professor as well of exhausted bromides, feminist clichés, victimological asides, and highly questionable political judgments. The repellent interview published in the *New York Times* of November 21 was designed, I take it, either to substitute for a reading of her works or else, as in my case, to cancel any interest whatsoever in Elfriede Jelinek. Karl Kraus (1874-1936) not only has (not to mention *had*) a much more trenchant wit but is, even after all these decades, much more pertinent, and brilliantly represents the Austrian sensibility. Then again, Karl Kraus never received any Nobel prize, though he could have been a candidate for two of them—Literature for sure, and Peace as well. Karl Kraus was a true outsider, a prophet not without honor even in his own country, and not a well-heeled insider pretending to be an angst-ridden alien.

But then that brings up the embarrassing subject of the Nobel Peace Prize as well as the spotty history of the Literature Prize and the whole explosives-derived, Scandinavian-administered context of the Prizes themselves. If memory serves, Theodore Roosevelt was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1906, and I think he deserved it. A visit to the house at Oyster Bay, where Teddy stood in the hall between the Russians and the Japanese in the rooms on either side, imprints that on the mind. But Woodrow Wilson won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1919, and he did not deserve it, because his actions and words sparked endless conflict with no end in sight. George C. Marshall (1953) and Jimmy Carter (2002) seemed to be deserving winners of the award, which is rather more than I can say for Willy Brandt (1971), Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho (1973), Sean MacBride (1974), Élie Wiesel (1986), Rigoberta Menchu (1992), or Yasser Arafat (1994).

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So then the Literature Prize would be less political and contentious, right? Wrong. The first 20 years of the award are impressive, and I think I spotted only one Fascist, though he was not at that time yet one (Knut Hamson, 1920), and perhaps I remarked only one literary genius for whom the award would today be impossible (Rudyard Kipling, 1907). In the ensuing decade, we should note that, though W.B. Yeats deserved his award (1923) as utterly as any writer ever did, today, such an honor would not be supported even in Ireland. Two years later, George Bernard Shaw won the award, which only goes to show that quantity is sometimes confused with quality, and that support for Mussolini at that time, as for Stalin later on, is hardly disqualifying. The award to Henri Bergson in 1927 confused one kind of discourse with another, as would subsequent ones to Bertrand Russell (1950) and Winston Churchill (1953). The recognition of Sigrid Undset and Thomas Mann in 1928 and 1929, respectively, was given for every good reason, but the award to Sinclair Lewis (1930), like those to John Galsworthy (1932) and Pearl Buck (1938), was not. The award to Luigi Pirandello (1934) could not have been more deserved, but the great man subsequently gave his gold medal to be melted down for support of the Fascist cause. And there have been some questions since those days, about Jean-Paul Sartre (1964), Mikhail Sholokov (1965, and make that two Stalinists in a row), and the utterly untalented Stalinist Pablo Neruda (1971). The leftist agenda still finds expression, and there are such anomalies as Dario Fo (1997) among such superior writers as Seamus Heaney (1995) and V.S. Naipaul (2001). All in all, the Nobel Prize in Literature has been such a mixed bag that the imperious sway of the honor is, at best, a mixed blessing.

Turning away with a shudder from such global sweep and presumption, perhaps we could address something a bit more focused and relatively simple: I mean the subject of cultural recognition in our own country. Do you suppose that, with developed institutions, this nation might be able to recognize superior achievement and reward it? If your answer is Yes, then maybe you haven't been paying attention. There are various organizations that support awards for achievements in the arts, of course, and different modes and levels of honors and honoraria, but no sooner do we identify one of these than we encounter problems with track records, or establishment logrolling, or ideologically imposed quota systems, or just plain lack of judgment.

As Henny Youngman would say, take the National Book Award for fiction, please. This year, the five finalists were all females living in New York City who had published precious little bookies they called novels—or were they hybrid short-story amalgamations? But, lest I stoke any outrage, I hasten to mention the stuff that didn't make the cut: no John Updike's

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latest sex memoirs, no Philip Roth's latest pogrom fantasy, no Gore Vidal, no Norman Mailer—every cloud has a silver lining. It seems that the judges of the award applied "writerly" criteria to the finalists, rating style or technique over force, substance, and story. If so, they expressed the dilemmas inherent in their position, as well as inherent in the position of art in a late-capitalist mass society. As it happened, Lily Tuck won the award for *The News From Paraguay*, an historical novel about material that has been treated before. The publishing industry was not satisfied, nor were those who wanted to see some history made. I think Tuck's award will become part of her résumé when she begins to profess creative writing, if she has not already done so.

But what about the Pulitzer Prizes? A comparison finds that the National Book Awards have mostly been "better"—more reflective of lasting merit—than the Pulitzers have been. Looking back on the list of winners for novel (until 1948) and fiction since then, we find much that we would have otherwise. For example and famously, Margaret Mitchell and *Gone With the Wind* won over William Faulkner and *Absalom, Absalom!* in 1937. It was the classic case of overwhelming popular success trumping experimentation and high seriousness. Mitchell's book is better than it is thought to be today, but Faulkner's masterpiece lives on a summit of inspiration and execution with *Moby-Dick*. Faulkner was compensated by two Pulitzers he did not deserve, for *A Fable* (1955) and *The Reivers* (1962). Otherwise, we can say of the Pulitzers that the only memorable award in the 40's was to Robert Penn Warren for *All the King's Men* (1948), but that at the beginning, the names of Booth Tarkington (*The Magnificent Ambersons*, 1919; *Alice Adams*, 1922) and Edith Wharton (*The Age of Innocence*, 1921) and Willa Cather (*One of Ours*, 1923) must make us wonder which were better, the writers, or the judges, or both. Did Fitzgerald win a Pulitzer? No, but Hemingway did, like Faulkner, after, not when, he deserved it (*The Old Man and the Sea*, 1953). Katherine Anne Porter deserved the award in 1966 for her *Collected Stories*, and that may be the best fiction to win a Pulitzer in the last 40 years, unless it is John Kennedy Toole's *A Confederacy of Dunces*, posthumously awarded in 1981.

There isn't much point, though, in worrying about awards, because people read what they want, and reputations have a way of taking care of themselves. No, the underlying crux is in the idea of an award in itself, and in the discrediting of that idea. I once heard of an ordinary woman in a ordinary town who once marched into the gift shop and purchased a silver bowl. She promptly had it engraved with her own name as "The XXX XXXX Bowl" and presented it annually to a person of choice in her community. How I applaud her Napoleonic audacity, for an award means little more! I think P.G. Wodehouse would have understood the point.

But it was not this certain woman who discredited the concept of awards—she only demonstrated the truth that had already been established. After all, well over 2,000 years ago, in a society without Al Gore or the internet, there was a competition for the best slate of tragedies with some satyr plays thrown in, and the winners of this competition had names such as Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. There was then no conflict between excellence and community, between art and the public. And only 200 years ago, Jefferson still insisted that excellence and democracy were not incompatible. Nor do I argue that they are. I do say, however, that a false culture, a culture based on falsehood, cannot successfully adjudicate artistic competitions. The example here is not the Booker Prize but the Oscars and perhaps the Golden Globes, the Emmys, and the Grammy Awards. As the buffed and preening humanoids present themselves for our thrilled examination, the best commentary is that of Joan Rivers, and even she only when being a complete bitch. We may have noticed that the best pictures do not win, and the best actors, rarely. But the quota systems of the diversity machine are operative, as indeed they are in the literary prizes. And the rot has long since penetrated the White House, *pace* Jefferson, in which the presentation of the Presidential Medals of Freedom has degenerated into a TV show with a feel-good agenda, and every little group gets an award. Everybody gets an award, except Benny Hill.

The explosion of the media and the markets in the 20th century has put us in a bizarre position. America presumes to world dominance militarily, but her real strength is through Hollywood and related mass phenomena.

Even such a cursory examination is revealing of a cultural void, a gap, and even more and even better, a failure, an undeniable shortcoming that may paradoxically be a bracing lesson. Ever since the days of the Puritans, our country has had problems with art, its nature and its status, and not even the most formidable of writers and thinkers, such as Poe, Emerson, Melville, and Dickinson, could resolve the clashes in the 19th century, though vulgarians such as Whitman and Twain did. The explosion of the media and the markets in the 20th century, as well as the exacerbation of aesthetic conflicts represented by the academy, on the one hand, and High Modernism, on the other, have put us in a bizarre position. America presumes to world dominance militarily, but her real and corrupting strength is through Hollywood and related mass phenomena. In other words, we may like to talk about Edith Wharton, but Lara Croft, Tomb Raider, has more quantifiable clout and more visible chest; or, to put it another way, sex and bad music is a winner, and you don't even have to think. There was a time when Theodore Roosevelt in effect patronized Edwin Arlington Robinson because he read his poems, but today, poetry has been made rather problematical by slams and hip hop, in which "shotgun blast" rhymes with "white cop ass." In such an aesthetically challenged environment, the awarding of prizes for literary achievement becomes as absurd as it is impossible. The market and the money will overwhelm, if they have not already done so, the fusty sense of social control represented by establishmentarian awards, which themselves must be understood as emblems of the co-optation of leftist radicalism.

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Measuring Our Culture of Death

A Sobering Look at the Family in America

by Christopher J. Check

One side is celebrating, the other rending their garments, but both sides are wondering if the outcome of the November presidential election might signal a springtime for traditional moral values in America. Rappers P. Diddy and Eminem doubtless turned more voters away from Kerry than they attracted, and, in all states where voters were asked to define marriage, the majority agreed on a union of one man and one woman. Nonetheless, a Middle American reaction to the prospect of legal approval of sodomy, while encouraging, is hardly much of a barometer by which to measure the nation's cultural and social health. A better sense of just how "traditional" American values are can be gleaned from the latest Census Bureau data on the family. It might be time to sober up.

The family is the origin of civilized society, and every family begins with a marriage. How is marriage faring? Consider divorce rates over the last half-century. In 1950, there were 2.6 divorces per 1,000 population. The figure peaked in 1981 with 5.3 per 1,000 and has declined somewhat to 4.0 per 1,000 population in 2001. Is this good news? Not if we consider the data alongside the marriage rate. In 1950, there were 11.1 marriages per 1,000 population, in 1981, 10.6; and in 2001, only 8.4. Thus, the rate of divorce was 23 percent of that of marriage in 1950; it increased to 50 percent in 1981; and it hovers now around 48 percent, even as the overall marriage rate continues to fall.

Data from the past decade does not indicate any kind of turnaround. From 1990 to 2002, the percentage of the adult population (18 and over) that is married has dropped from 61.9 to 58.9 percent. Correspondingly, the percentage of the same population that has never married has risen from 22.2 to 24.4 percent, and the percentage that is divorced has risen from 8.3 to 10.0 percent. The retreat from marriage that began in 1960, when nearly 72 percent of the adult population was married, continues.

Births are another good gauge of a society's health. Here, there is bad news and bad news masquerading as good news. First, illegitimacy continue to rise, as it has done for the last half-century. Indeed, the percentage of illegitimate births has increased nearly nine times from 1950 to 2001: from 4 percent to 34 percent of all births. Again, nothing in the past decade indicates a turnaround, and the current percentages of illegitimate births by race are alarming: In 2001, 68 percent of black, 59 percent of Puerto Rican, 40 percent of Mexican, 50 percent of Hawaiian, 60 percent of American Indian, and 28 percent of white births were illegitimate. Second, something that looks like good news, so far as births are concerned, is a recent rise in the total fertility rate (TFR). This figure measures whether a population is replacing itself by predicting the number of births that a woman will have during her childbearing years. In 1972, the TFR dropped below replacement level, reached its nadir in 1976 (1.7) and languished below replacement level until 2000, when it reached 2.1.

Alongside Europe, our commitment to childbearing may look vigorous (in Italy, deaths now outnumber births), but there are other factors to bear in mind. First of all, when only two thirds of births are within wedlock, *marital* fertility is below replacement level. Because an illegitimate child is significantly more likely to bear or sire an illegitimate child than is a child born to an intact marriage, marriage is not "replacing itself." What's more, it is doubtful, in the face of a continued rise in the average age of the population, that the TFR will long remain above replacement level. The median age of the population today is 36. It is projected to be 38 by 2050. While it is true that more children are born today than even during the Baby Boom, children diminish each year as a percentage of the total population. The Census Bureau does predict the TFR holding at 2.1 into 2010, but this rate will be buoyed by nonwhite fertility. By the same year, the TFR for Americans of European descent is projected to drop below replacement level.

Elsewhere on the childbearing front, families with three or more children are rare and getting rarer. They were 12 percent of all families in 1980 and 10 percent of all families in 2002. Making matters worse, nearly a quarter of all families with three or more children are single-parent families. Again, finding signs of a turnaround is difficult. The percentage of families with two or more children under the age of six is alarming: only six percent. What percentage of families have four or more children under the age of 18? Three percent. In the 1980's, we passed a milestone in the nation's demographic history. Today, more than half of our families (52 percent) have no children under the age of 18. Put another way, when we use the word *family*, we may think of a father and a mother and their minor children, but that composition describes the minority of "families" in America today.

The nation's weak commitment to childbearing can be measured by the nearly universal use of contraception. Among the roughly 30 million currently married women between the ages of 15 and 44, 41 percent resort to surgical sterility (tubal ligation is much more common than vasectomy), 19 percent use some kind of hormonal contraceptive (the Pill, implants, injectables); while another 17 percent resort to some kind of device (a condom, diaphragm, or IUD.) Nonusers plus couples practicing Natural Family Planning total less than ten percent of married couples. Contraceptive use among unmarried women is less common, but not for the reasons we might hope; more than 70 percent of unmarried women have had

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sexual intercourse.

Abortions have dropped a little. They reached their peak in 1990 at 1.6 million per year and today hover around 1.3 million, more than twice the number in pre-*Roe* 1972. There are 674 black abortions for every 1,000 black live births; 20 percent of women who abort their babies are married; and somewhere between 1-in-4 and 1-in-3 women alive today have had an abortion. Consider that figure the next time you are sitting in a restaurant, movie theater, or church.

Two other measures of a nation's commitment to children are the percentage of married women in the paid labor force and the use of institutional daycare. In 1970, 40 percent of married women were in the paid labor force; in 2002, the figure was 61 percent. Among women who have had a child in the last year, 58 percent are in the paid labor force. With so many working mothers, institutional daycare use remains common. Of the 8.5 million children ages three to five, 56 percent are in institutional daycare. Only 26 percent are actually cared for (we might even say *reared*) by their own parents. Moreover, daycare is not simply a last resort of the desperate working class. Among children ages three to five who come from households with incomes in the $50,000 to $75,000 range, 62 percent are in institutional daycare; among children of the same age from households with incomes greater than $75,000, 75 percent are in institutional daycare. Among this latter group, only 12 percent are actually reared by their parents. The highest percentage of children who are cared for by a parent on a daily basis come from households in which the annual income falls in the $40,000 to $50,000 bracket: 36 percent.

Giving an account of the causes of the current crisis in family life is well beyond the scope of this brief summary of the current data. Moreover, this task has been capably performed by historians who have identified, among other factors, the invention of divorce, the Industrial Revolution, the rise of the welfare state, and the sexual revolution as culprits. The chief tool of the sexual revolution, contraception, is so widely promoted in public schools and on prime-time television that the likelihood of a nationwide resurgence in childbearing seems doubtful, to say nothing of a serious drop in divorce, a pathology to which contraception is tied. What is more likely is that the ultimate form of contraceptive sex, sodomy, will continue to gain more broad acceptance. While voters in 11 states overwhelmingly rejected legal recognition of homosexual unions, the fact that the matter had to be submitted to a vote is evidence of a society very close to (if not already in) the abyss. Even in the declining days of ancient Rome and Greece, where contraception (and then homosexuality) became more common, no government put the matter of sodomy before the public for approval. The forces who reject tradition are well practiced in planting their flag so far outside the mainstream that what we call moderate today would have been the fringe as little as half a century ago.

> The percentage of families with two or more children under the age of six is alarming: only six percent.

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What's Next for the Imperial Judiciary?

The Welcome Constitutional Crisis Continues

by William J. Quirk

"How much power Congress has to block Supreme Court consideration of the constitutionality of its laws is an open question." This, the *Washington Post* said in a September 23, 2004, editorial, is "somewhat surprising." The *Post* shouldn't be so astonished, for the real surprise is that judicial supremacy—the doctrine that the Court interprets the Constitution not only to decide the case before it but to establish rules for the other two branches and the country—is quickly moving from cherished folklore to exploded myth.

The House, the *Post* continued, is scheduled to take up the Republican leadership's "latest attack on the federal courts." In July 2004, the House passed, by a 233-192 vote, H.R. 3313 in reaction to the Massachusetts Supreme Court's ruling that the state constitution protects "gay marriage." Ever since the U.S. Supreme Court found a constitutional right to sodomize in *Lawrence and Garner* v. *Texas*, some have come to suspect that it will use the Full Faith and Credit Clause to impose a Massachusetts "gay marriage" on, say, Florida. Each state, under H.R. 3313, would decide for itself—but not for any other.

Now comes the Pledge of Allegiance. The Ninth Circuit, two years ago in *Newdow*, deleted the words "under God" from the pledge by saying that Congress had violated the First Amendment prohibition against enacting a "law respecting the establishment of religion." The Supreme Court, on June 22, 2004, reversed the Ninth Circuit, but only on the convenient procedural ground that the case was not properly brought before it because a father had no standing to argue a case on behalf of a daughter of whom he does not have custody. Three justices, led by Chief Justice Rehnquist, wrote that they were ready to reverse on the merits but lacked a fourth and a fifth. That sent a fairly clear signal that the Court, as soon as the issue gets back to it, will probably delete "under God."

The Pledge Protection Act (H.R. 2028), which the House passed on September 23, 2004, removes any case involving the pledge from the Supreme Court's docket. The House passed the bill, 247 to 173, with 34 Democrats crossing over, after which the *New York Times* editorialized: "The House passed a measure yesterday retaining the Pledge of Allegiance's 'under God' phrase and prohibiting any federal court—including outrageously, the Supreme Court—from judging the law's constitutionality." The House, the *Times* continued, "proposed to protect a patriot's ritual by trashing the constitutional system it celebrates," and the Pledge Protection Act "echoed the mean-spirited and unconstitutional" Marriage Protection Act, which the House had passed in July. Academics were no nicer: Prof. Marci Hamilton of Cardozo Law School called the bill "constitutional lunacy."

William J. Quirk is a professor at the University of South Carolina School of Law.

The House Democrats who did not cross over, however, went well beyond "mean-spirited," "outrageous," or even "lunacy." Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-NY) set the tone:

> I ask my colleagues, is demagoging a case that they have won in court so far really worth destroying the enforceability of the Bill of Rights? I urge my conservative colleagues to shape up and act like conservatives for once. We live in a free society that protects unpopular minorities even if the majority hates that minority. Feel free to hate if my colleagues must, but please leave our Constitution, leave our liberties, leave our civil liberties that define this Nation and makes it what it is, leave it alone.

"Feel free to hate if my colleagues must" is not a good way to begin a discussion. House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) followed up by calling the bill an "assault on our cherished Constitution and independent judiciary." Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA) said it was "bizarre." Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) queried, "I wonder, can they be that dumb, or are they being venal, or is it both?" The Republican Party, in Jay Inslee's (D-WA) view, "today intends to treat the Bill of Rights the way the Soviet Union operated during their long tyranny." This bill, said Maxine Waters (D-CA), "would destroy the Supreme Court's historical function as the interpreter and ultimate arbiter of what the Constitution requires." "Who will ultimately determine what is constitutional," asks Melvin Watt (D-NC), the Supreme Court or "the arrogance of my colleagues here in this body?" Pete Stark (D-CA) notes that "everyone here realizes that if Congress could just pass whatever laws it wanted and throw in a line to keep this from being held unconstitutional" the Constitution would be rendered meaningless. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) said she stood "here today formerly a second-class citizen in America, and if it had not been for the courts," she would still be.

The two sides deeply disagreed about who should be running the country. Most of the Democrats believe in judicial supremacy; as Robert Scott (D-VA) put it: "We need the Federal courts to protect our rights." On the other side, Todd Akin (R-MO), H.R. 2028's author, disagreed. The Democratic Party "really sees [the Court] as supreme, as the final decision on everything, and regardless of what they say, we have to suck it in and live with it. What I am saying is, that is alien to the thinking of our Founders. It is completely wrong." Indeed, as Thomas Jefferson wrote, "All just powers arise from the consent of the governed"; they are not imposed by Platonic guardians.

Jefferson believed that each branch should interpret the Constitution for its own purposes. In 1819, he wrote: "[E]ach

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of the three departments has equally the right to decide for itself what is its duty under the constitution without regard to what the others may have decided for themselves under a similar question." His tripartite or departmental theory is perhaps best demonstrated by his approach to the Sedition Act (1798). Though the lower federal courts had found the Sedition Act constitutional, President Jefferson terminated all pending prosecutions and pardoned those who had been convicted. In 1804, Abigail Adams criticized Jefferson's handling of the Sedition Act controversy, and the President answered:

> You seem to think that it devolved on the judges to decide the validity of the sedition law. But nothing in the constitution has given them the right to decide for the executive, more than to the executive to decide for them. Both magistracies are equally independent in the sphere assigned to them. The judges, believing the law constitutional, had a right to pass a sentence of fine and imprisonment, because that power was placed in their hands by the constitution. But the Executive, believing the law to be unconstitutional, was bound to remit the execution of it; because that power has been confided to him by the constitution. That instrument meant that its co-ordinate branches should be checks on each other.

To give the judiciary the final say on constitutional matters would, in Jefferson's words, make it "a despotic branch."

Although they were certain in July that the bill was unconstitutional, by September, the Democrats had their doubts that the Supreme Court would quickly swat down H.R. 3313 if it passed. They took to talking more about the wisdom of H.R. 2028, the policy—do you want 50 different interpretations of the Constitution?—and the Court's historic role. Why the change? Perhaps they had read the actual language of Article III, which explicitly grants Congress control of the jurisdiction of the federal courts. Or perhaps they had read Alexander Hamilton's *Federalist* No. 81:

> To avoid all inconveniences, it will be safest to declare generally that the Supreme Court shall possess appellate jurisdiction that shall be subject to such exceptions and regulations as the national legislature may prescribe. This will enable the government to modify it in such a manner as will best answer the ends of public justice and security.

They could also have read Justice William Brennan, who wrote that "virtually all matters that might be heard in Article III Federal courts could also be left by Congress to the state Courts." Furthermore, in July 2004, the dean of Stanford Law School, Larry Kramer, published *The People Themselves—Popular Constitutionalism and Judicial Review*, which concludes: "The Supreme Court is not the highest authority in the land on constitutional law. We are." The country's elite law schools, of course, have been the breeding grounds of judicial supremacy. No more. The Court's longtime allies are deserting ship.

Rep. Anthony D. Weiner (D-NY) strongly opposed the bill and wondered, *What's next?* What is wrong with the bills in which you do *not* strip judicial review? Are they less important? Do you not love them as much? What about abortion? The answer, of course, as Representative Weiner knows, is that it is not a matter of love; Congress has to make a judgment when uniformity is important and when it is not. It might, for example, think that whether a town square can have a crèche at Christmastime could be handled at the state level.

Weiner also asks, "but if the courts are not interpreting the Constitution of the United States, who is going to do it?" The state courts will, as Justice Brennan said, as long as Congress lets them. In fact, Congress, believing that the state courts were competent to decide issues of constitutional law in the first instance, did not provide for "federal question" jurisdiction in the lower federal courts until 1875. In any case, under our system, constitutionality is not decided just by courts. Congress makes its implicit finding of constitutionality when it enacts a law. Then, the courts authorized by Congress may hear challenges to it. Finally, the executive must find it constitutional before enforcing it. Each branch determines constitutionality for its own purposes. Three branches, not one, decide constitutionality. If they disagree, they have to work out their differences. That arrangement may not satisfy Representative Weiner's sense of neatness—and it may not be efficient—but it is the best a republic can do.

Constitutionality is not decided just by courts. Three branches, not one, decide constitutionality. If they disagree, they have to work out their differences. That arrangement may not be efficient, but it is the best that a republic can do.

"Sometimes, it is said, that man cannot be trusted with the government of himself," Jefferson wrote in his First Inaugural Address. "Can he, then, be trusted with the government of others? Or have we found angels in the forms of kings to govern him?"

What is next? H.R. 3313 and H.R. 2028 are reactions to the Court's excesses. No sane person thinks a Massachusetts "gay marriage" should be imposed on Florida. No sane person thinks the pledge establishes a religion. Yet, in both cases, the Supreme Court has strongly signaled that, as soon as someone can get the right cases before it, it will decide in favor of "gay marriage" and delete "under God." The House responded by using its Article III power to remove those cases from the Supreme Court's docket and allow the state courts to decide them instead. The Court's arrogance had finally wakened a sleeping giant.

The Senate did not consider either bill, but the basis for its inaction is unclear. In any case, the House, in the summer of 2004, exploded the myth of judicial supremacy. The legislature reasserted its constitutional power and duty, and democracy crept, on little cat feet, back into Jefferson's country.

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Ghosts on the Stairs

by Derek Turner

"F- - k socialism!"

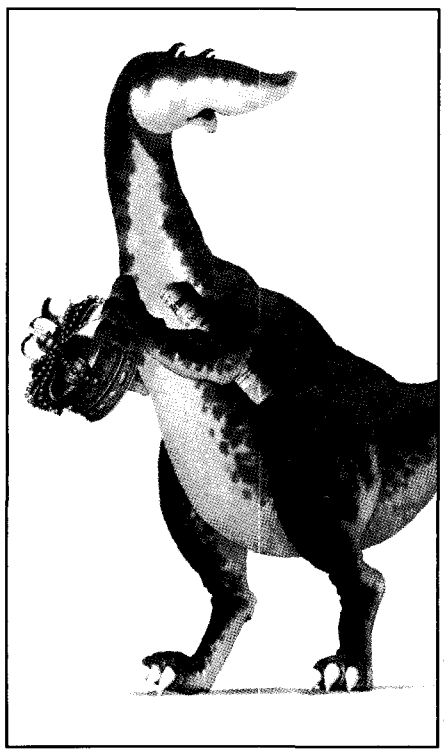
—Evelyn Waugh

In Defence of Aristocracy
by Peregrine Worsthorne
London: HarperCollins;
160 pp., £15

◆

Octogenarian knight Sir Peregrine Worsthorne is famous in Britain for several things. He was the editor of the *Sunday Telegraph* and a political columnist for that paper for 30 years. He is married to the jolly Lucinda Lambton, who presents enjoyable, occasional TV programs on heritage-related topics. He wears pink bowties. Less creditably, he was the first person to use on British radio a certain four-letter word starting with *f*. And, like his Tory and *Telegraph* contemporary Lord (Bill) Deedes, he has been immortalized by the British satirical magazine *Private Eye* as "Sir Perishing Worthless."

Private Eye's fondness for this disrespectful nickname is very funny. It is also symptomatic, however, of the way in which Britain's aristocracy has plummeted in the estimation of British people. A once well-known British proverb was "Everyone loves a lord." Now, while most Britons still seem to attach a degree of talismanic respect to titles and harbor a fondness for the monarchy, these are tinged with aggrievement and envy, as was seen during the long-drawn-out mawkishness of the death and funeral of Princess Diana—the "People's Princess," whose supposed demotic virtues were set in contradistinction to the alleged reactionary vices of her in-laws and of the relict Tory aristocracy in general. "Diana had shown the Royal Family up for what they are—a numb, dumb dinosaur," said one shrewish columnist at the time. And "numb, dumb dinosaurs" is what many people seem to think of the aristocracy. That sour, puritan strain that is one of the least attractive ingredients of the British character is sadly alive and well in today's Labour politicians and leftish opinion-formers. As Worsthorne puts it, aristocratic deference has been replaced by "egalitarian hypocrisy at the top and proletarian rancour at the bottom."



Melanie Anderson

Meanwhile, the Tories—*quelle surprise!*—are united in doing little or nothing to defend the aristocracy, despite its historical relevance and redolence. Even during the supposedly "Conservative" governments between 1979 and 1997, Margaret Thatcher and John Major were more interested in estate agents than in earls. In 1995, Major even said that he wanted an oxymoronic "classless society," seemingly not realizing that the old order he decried would inevitably be replaced by one less pleasant, less useful, less colorful, less independent, and less historically aware. Major's various successors as Tory leader have all been similarly uninterested in what happens to the aristocracy, with William Hague declining even to join battle over Tony Blair's proposed Lords "reform," which sought to evict the hereditary peers from the House of Lords. One might have hoped that a politician ostensibly concerned about conserving a great heritage might have been concerned about losing parliamentarians who, as Viscount Hampden put it at the time, "carried the whole history of this country in their veins." It seemed to be more important to him, however, to make opportunistic (and predictably fruitless) appearances at the Notting Hill Carnival and various gay-pride festivals.

Though one cannot expect too much of politicians, one might have hoped that at least conservative opinion-formers might have made the intellectual case for preserving the aristocracy. Indeed, there were some counterintuitive *Daily Mail* and *Daily Telegraph* commentators at the time of the House of Lords reforms who sought to defend the parliamentary *status quo*, but they were writing in a vacuum. Always lacking—until now, when it is really too late—was a more ambitious general defense of aristocracy as a boon in itself.

In the postwar decades, the Centre for Policy Studies, the Conservatives' policy think tank, issued hundreds of pamphlets and discussion papers on multifarious topics. The majority of these, however, tended to be on financial subjects or gave purely financial "answers" to nonfinancial problems, reflecting the Tories' inexorable mutation into economic-reductionist liberals, whose self-interest was

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increasingly unenlightened. Thought on nonfinancial subjects was left to a coterie of fringe intellectuals, such as the eccentric Anthony Ludovici—a handsome anthology of whose recondite thought has recently been published, and many of whose (admittedly uneven) writings can now be found at *anthonymludovici.com*. As long ago as 1915, he authored a book likewise called *A Defence of Aristocracy*—of which Worsthorne appears never to have heard. Ludovici never had any effect on Conservative policy (despite having such fans as Auberon Waugh), and neither will the quixotic Sir Peregrine. It is all far too little, far too late.

Worsthorne seems to recognize this; at any rate, his book is more of an elegy than a call to arms. He does not, he says, advocate reinstating the old upper class, but wishes "to highlight the gaping hole left in the head of our body politic by its extinction." Accordingly, there are virtually no policy proposals in these pages, just (mostly) sapient reflections combined with personal reminiscences and gentle denunciation of what he calls "the presentists" in all political parties, who, "instead of seeing the nation state as a great oak with deep roots . . . portray it as something more like a potted plant." Their "determination to blank out the past," he believes, runs the risk not just of permanently erasing the concept of gentlemanliness that long made life in Britain so agreeable but will also have "the effect of blanking out the future." As Worsthorne says in his Prologue, "the role of the hereditary aristocracy in British history was so massive and splendid that it cannot . . . just fold up its tents and walk away." Yet this is what New Labour and today's Tory Lites are compelling them to do, with incalculable but certainly damaging effects for national cohesion.

Worsthorne, let it be understood, is defending not any particular class but rather the code of gentlemanliness that he believes is the hereditary peerage's chief bequest to the nation, and which permeates—or permeated until recently—every aspect of British (especially English) life. This quality, born of "tolerant and genial paternalism" and of "tolerant and genial subordination . . . the spirit of Britain's unwritten constitution," allowed for "power consisting of multiple accommodations and understandings; power refined by customs and traditions; power grounded in history rather than raw rationality." He points out that "fear of being caught out in ungentlemanly behaviour . . . acted as a far more effective deterrent to bad behaviour than fear of hellfire." Now, he says, "it is almost as if the English people, once proud to be a nation of gentlemen, suddenly feels a pressing need to show . . . that they have become instead a nation of non-gentlemen." We have a situation "where no man is a gentleman—a dystopian ideal that is in danger of being realised." As a consequence, "where there used to be authority, there is now weakness and guilt, and where there used to be loyal subordination there is now bloody-mindedness and bitterness."

Worsthorne's understandable concern about this phenomenon leads him occasionally into overstatement, as when he writes that "gentlemanliness . . . has become, if not a dirty word, then a word likely to elicit at best a sneer or a snigger and at worst even a snarl." I have good news for Sir Peregrine: So far as I can see, gentlemanliness is still widely esteemed by large numbers of Britons, even if the term has fallen somewhat into abeyance. He is right, however, to highlight the deeply disturbing "mockney" phenomenon—the tendency for people of wealthy and cultured backgrounds to feel so guilty about their upbringing that they deliberately try to sound and behave as if they were from a lower social class. Examples include the violinist Nigel Kennedy, who tries hard to live down his blameless Tunbridge Wells and public-school background in a welter of breezy fake vulgarity (although his choice of instrument does rather give the game away). This inverse snobbery is inculcated in all kinds of subtle ways, not least through the BBC, which has famously pensioned off broadcasters who sound "too posh." As the author puts it neatly, "if Old Britain was unfair to those who spoke common, the new system is unfair to those who refuse to act common."

The villain of the piece is not so much leftist egalitarianism but that "triumphant capitalism" which "had no need to make use of the gentlemanly public-service ethos." There was a certain similarity of aims between the political left, who regarded Thatcherism as callous and unfair, and the pre-Thatcher aristocrats, who regarded Thatcherism as both vulgar and socially deleterious. Worsthorne maintains, surely justifiably, that, without the tacit support of the hereditary peers, there would have been no welfare state. Socialist concern for the plight of the poor was assisted by aristocratic *noblesse oblige*. The author pulls no punches, saying that Mrs. Thatcher was "a force as destructive of gentlemanliness as any in the 1960s." Thatcherite attacks on the miners, *et al.*, drove a wedge, he believes, between the classes and have had the incidental effect of subverting the old order that they were supposed to protect:

> We now have a modernizing, classless political consensus consisting of a non-socialist New Labour Party and a pro-capitalist New Conservative Party . . . instead of two socially conservative parties, we now have two iconoclastic, and in that metaphorical sense, radical, parties.

Sir Peregrine distrusts the whole idea of meritocracy, pointing out—surely correctly—that "meritocrats, each having climbed up the ladder alone . . . are the last people likely to put civility before self-advancement." He thinks too much emphasis was placed by the Thatcherites on "success," to the extent that education is becoming mere training:

> Instead of teaching their pupils culture so that they might become connoisseurs, [the private schools] taught them culture so that they might get jobs as adults at Christie's and Sotheby's selling off the artistic treasures generations of ancestors had spent their lives collecting.

Such an attitude toward education is, of course, ultimately harmful to civilized values.

The author's writing style is of its time, occasionally managing to sound both orotund and twee to modern ears—even such reactionary ears as mine. I have never before come across the word *betwixt* used in all seriousness in a modern book, and Worsthorne's evocation of a child "who feels obliged to add the name of some much disliked gorgon of an aunt to its bedtime supplications" is straight from Wodehouse. But this fustiness should not be allowed to obtrude betwixt the reader and the writer's many wise observations and arguments.

Less forgivable is his complacency about the allegedly glorious legacy of the old aristocracy. The truth, of course, is that the left, the Old Right, and the New

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Right are all somewhat responsible for helping to plunge Britain into her present state of disrepair. The freemasonry of tastes and the sense of "conciliation and compromise" that used to obtain within Britain's tight-knit old ruling class were admirable qualities, but they could be, and were, turned to ignoble as well as noble ends. Gentlemanliness is always pleasant, but not always appropriate, in politics. If the peers had asserted themselves more in the postwar period, perhaps Britain might be a better place today. Worsthorne is not blind to Britain's present degradation and "likely disappearance to all great effects and noble purposes"; but he is blind to his class's contribution to that degradation. He admits that the *ancien régime* did "falter" on the postwar economic front but does not appear to think it should take any blame for such other phenomena as family breakdown, mass immigration, or Britain's membership in the European Union.

Individual aristocrats, of course, opposed these developments; overall, however, the hereditary peers were blithely ignorant of social changes that affected the inner cities most of all, or were powerless to avert change, or avoided resistance to it. Often, their motives were fine ones, but they were misguided nonetheless. Typical of the somewhat myopic view of many members of the aristocracy at critical junctures in British history are the comments of Worsthorne's stepuncle Ronnie Norman (brother of Montagu Norman, interwar governor of the Bank of England), who said of immigrants, "If they were good enough to fight and die for Britain, they are good enough to live in Britain." Gracious impulses can sometimes lead to unpleasing results. More recently, the hereditary peers could not even organize to save themselves from expulsion from the House of Lords. Despite promising "guerrilla tactics," their gentlemanly habits went too deep, and, for the most part, they silently acquiesced in their humiliation (one exception being the present Lord Salisbury's shrewd deal to keep 92 hereditary peers in place, at least for a time—for which action he was sacked as Tory leader in the Lords by that great statesman, William Hague).

Along the way, Worsthorne engages in a bit of genteel historical revisionism, sticking up for the pre-war aristocratic appeasers of Hitler, who, he says, acted out of a kind of "sober courage" and realization of the probable effects of any war with Germany on the country they loved. The Vichy experience, he says, may actually have been good for France, as it allowed the previously antipathetic republican and antirepublican camps to unite in a "guilty secret" of collaboration with the Germans. This does seem a little forced.

Two interesting chapters compare and contrast Britain's ruling class with the WASP "aristocracy" of the United States and France's *enarques*—the graduates of the Ecole National d'administration, set up during the Fourth Republic. Worsthorne is an admirer of the *enarques*; the only actual proposal in his book is that Britain's public schools should set up a comparable system for the United Kingdom. Sometimes, his enthusiasm runs away with him. For instance, he says that the *enarques* allowed France to create "a new French empire on the European continent." Yet it is surely very questionable whether France benefited from this. As with Britain's aristocracy, he also overstates the *enarques*' effectiveness. "Only an official class," he says, "with the extra cachet that comes with exclusivity would have enough confidence not to be overawed by France's notoriously arrogant circle of world-famous Paris intellectuals headed by Jean-Paul Sartre." Yet they *were* overawed; at any rate, France is indubitably suffering from the same pathologies that are now affecting every other Western nation.

All this being as it may, Worsthorne's is nonetheless an important book. It is a great pity that it comes too late to save the hereditary peers, whose presence in Westminster undoubtedly averted some harm, if not as much as Worsthorne likes to think. Britain shall miss those tweedy individualists whose very names were evocative of the older England so beloved of American poetess Alice Duer Miller:

> A red brick manor-house in Devon,
> In a beechwood of old grey trees,
> Ivy climbing to the clustered chimneys,
> Rustling in the wet south breeze.
> Gardens trampled down by Cromwell's army,
> Orchards of apple-trees and pears,
> Casements that had looked for the Armada,
> And a ghost on the stairs.

Yet perhaps their genial influence may persist, to be revived at some more pleasant future time, so it is right that it should here be commemorated so eloquently. The remnants of Old England may find that this book helps to codify their instinctive resistance to today's disagreeable state of affairs, while overseas readers are likely to discover that Worsthorne offers many lessons and applications for those who are generally interested in ideas of leadership, class, and social inequality. If we are ever again to revive Burke's ideal of a natural aristocracy in our various countries, we shall need to understand its nature and dynamics. C

Reckonings

(Cry havoc and let loose the dogs of war)

by B.R. Strahan

What we wreck comes to reckoning,
crying havoc in the teeming dark.
We hear the bark and bay
of the pack that will bring us down.

Out of the wreckage of our days
comes scattered flotsam of the drowned:
scarred fragments of painted wood,
faces embossed in frozen clay.

A shade of flesh still stays
but all reality, all reason's fled;
and we are left among the beasts,
no less sad and savage than they.

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The War Lovers

by Clyde Wilson

Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire
by Anne Norton
New Haven: Yale University Press;
235 pp., $25.00

◆

To save precious space in America's most important journal, I will refer to the subjects of this book as neocons. To make fine distinctions between academic and activist Straussians, as the author sometimes does, is akin to saying Marx is not to blame for his disciples.

Having long admired Prof. Anne Norton for her brilliant book on antebellum social thought, *Alternative Americas*, I was eager to see what an erudite, fair-minded liberal had to say about the monsters who now dispose of our blood and treasure. I am not entirely disappointed, nor entirely satisfied.

Norton is well situated to assess her subject, being a political scientist (University of Pennsylvania) who, while no Straussian herself, is nevertheless familiar with the doctrine of Straussians and personally acquainted with many of them from her time at the University of Chicago.

The neocons have had a lot of exposure—that is, they have been the object of numerous exposés—lately. (Anyone who thinks that exposure will lessen their power underestimates both their adaptability and the intellectual and moral shallowness of the American ruling class.) What this study adds to the picture are the (obvious now that it is pinned down) kinship of neocon "thought" to European fascism; an appreciative description of real American conservatism and how neoconism fails to resemble it in any respect; and an eloquent meditation on how our past mistakes and current weaknesses as a people have set us up for our present peril. After all, it was under the sainted Ronald Reagan that the neocons and their doctrine first got their hands on the levers of power, while Teddy Roosevelt is their exemplary hero. And much of the public seems to be as morally deadened by remote-control war as are our leaders.

So, Norton's take is well worth attention and gives us yet another perspective on our troubles. I find fault in two respects. First, she takes these people too seriously as wise readers of the major texts of Western civilization. Her evaluation is nonsense. They are phonies in this respect as in all else. Ask any classicist or historian.

Second, while rejecting the evil neocon vision of American Empire, the author seems to hold to one of her own that is much more wholesome, but perhaps just as unrealistic. She regrets the neocons because they have befouled her own liberal America. In this America, the degenerate riffraff marching on Selma are equated as heroes of democracy with the men who went ashore in Normandy, and Muslims are happy participants in a free society. The worst thing about the neocons, however, is not that they are intolerant of feminists and Muslims. It is that they are wasting the blood and substance of the American people, for whom they care no more than Robespierre cared for the French, or Hitler for the Germans. Their "New American Century" is not even American.

Clyde Wilson teaches history at the University of South Carolina and is the author of a recent collection, From Union to Empire.

radical \'rad-i-kəl\ *adj.*: "going to the root."

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San Francisco: Encounter Books; 186 pp., $25.95

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Roger Kimball, who edits the *New Criterion* and does art criticism for *National Review*, has set out to achieve two goals in this thin, concise book: pointing out "the depredations practiced by criticism on art" and aiming "to encourage the benevolent civilizing elements that have traditionally been accorded to our encounters with good art." Despite the limited range of the examples of fine art that Kimball examines (owing to his need to find illustrations for "the rape of the masters"), he does advance both of his purposes in the course of his work. Those artists he discusses—Courbet, Cézanne, Winslow Homer, Sargent, Rubens, Mark Rothko, Van Gogh, and Gauguin—become more familiar to us through his treatment of their would-be interpreters; and though not every artist considered ranks among the great geniuses, Kimball shows what the observer should be alert to in viewing his art. Since his tastes, moreover, are broad enough to embrace artistic developments over many centuries, Kimball can explain with equal ease the distinctive characteristics of artists in different periods and employing different techniques.

Kimball is devastating in skewering psychoanalytic and other indefensibly subjective interpretations of artists and their works. Indeed, by the time one has read through several chapters, it would seem that the sick puppies have taken over in the field of art criticism. Freudian art critic Michael Fried (J.R. Herbert Boone Professor of Humanities at the Johns Hopkins University and director of its humanities institute) has produced a study of Courbet's *La Curee* that Kimball quite rightly suggests is either a put-on or proof positive of insanity. In this picture of a slain deer, hounds (who bear a striking resemblance to my basset, Murray), and a lackey cradling a horn, Fried perceives Courbet's fear of being castrated. In fact, all of Courbet's work is supposedly full of sexual images that the critic effusively reveals to those of us obtuse enough not to have noticed. Fried understands his writings on Courbet as an extended meditation on "the metaphorics of phallicism, menstrual bleeding, pregnancy and flowers." Those who cannot believe that such drivel passes for serious thought and that its sources are honored at the highest universities should read the ravings of the interpretive authorities Kimball cites. And these are far from the worst of their kind. One Freudian art interpreter omitted by Kimball (Steven Z. Levine, a professor of humanities at Bryn Mawr) has written even more laughable prose than what Kimball serves up. Levine's book on Monet and Narcissus, in particular, is a muddle of dangling syntax full of disconnected allusions that I would defy anyone to read from cover to cover. In 1998, the already celebrated Levine received a dubious award from the journal *Philosophy and Literature* for the sheer "badness" of his writing.

My one major criticism of Kimball's book has to do with his sneering attack directed at the neoconservatives' *bête noire*, Martin Heidegger, *apropos* of Heidegger's (admittedly less-than-memorable) comments on Van Gogh's *A Pair of Shoes*. Heidegger, I suspect, owes his inclusion in *The Rape of the Masters* to something beyond his putative similarity to other silly art critics. Surely, he cannot have made the grade simply on account of his remarks about Van Gogh's painting. All of Kimball's other targets have identifiably Eastern European Jewish names, while even one of Kimball's least-favorite authors—Jacques Derrida—though a North African Francophone, was Jewish. In Heidegger, by contrast, we have a seemingly unobjectionable heavy: a Swabian Catholic who cultivated the Nazis in 1933 and is lambasted by Allan Bloom in *The Closing of the American Mind* as a proto-Nazi and precursor of the New Left. Yet this object lesson is not particularly effective; Kimball might have done better as a critic of bad aesthetics than to belittle a major Western existentialist philosopher. Heidegger was a morally flawed man who occasionally wrote murky prose; unlike Levine and Fried, however, he was not a lightweight or an academic huckster.

Another difference that I have with Kimball concerns his designation of his subjects as "politically correct." Although some of the critics he discusses have expressed negative views regarding male chauvinism, the problem Kimball highlights is not political. Rather, the scam he identifies occurs mainly in the sphere of private discourse. And it is promoted by the moral and cultural irresponsibility of private schools and patrons. Shouldn't those who endow the chairs held by those Kimball castigates have a care for the intellectual honesty of their occupants? From the evidence, this is not the case. In the now-vanished bourgeois age, the "rape of the masters" could never have been a lucrative business. What has made it profitable is the phenomenon Kimball explored in his earlier books: the rise of a postmodern (read: postbourgeois) culture. This metaphorical rape did not come about from government policy. It is not public administrators and judges who are pushing neo-Freudianism as a form of social indoctrination.

A minor point (from a non-neo-Freudian professor of humanities): Kimball's dedication of his book to an acknowledged mentor, William F. Buckley, Jr., contains a misspelled Greek phrase. "For the benefit of many" should read "*pollon houneka*," not "*pollon ouneka*."

Paul Gottfried, a professor of humanities at Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, is the author, most recently, of Multiculturalism and the Politics of Guilt *(University of Missouri Press).*

Victims of Pleasure

by Jonathan Chaves

Footprints in the Snow of the Moon
by John R. Harris
Beechgrove, TN: Mathews Book Publishers; 397 pp., $14.99

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I had long since given up on contemporary American fiction, although the Neoformalist movement has reinvigorated my interest in some of today's American poets. The last American novelist I really admired was Walker Percy. And even he never gave us what I had vaguely been looking for: a dramatization of the lives destroyed—or nearly so—by the 60's and 70's. But now I have discovered this novel, one that is quite literally dedicated "To the memory of an undistinguished generation cruelly sacrificed at the altar of Pleasure."

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John Harris, a former professor of English literature, is the editor of *Praesidium*, a fine journal of ideas and criticism that appears both in print and online (*literatevalues.org/prae-4.3.htm*). He is also a novelist who, judging from this book, deserves to be much better known. From the epigraph from *Orlando Furioso* (*Le lacrime e i sospiri degli amanti . . .*) to the final sentence on page 397, there is not a false note. It is as if an American Dostoyevsky had taken on the Baby Boom generation and shown us just how their ideas and pursuits, while providing "great times" for some of them for a while, contributed to the construction of a living hell for others and, eventually, for some of themselves. I have suspected for decades that my first wife and my three children—to say nothing of myself during the worst period of my 61-year existence—were among those legions for whom the Dionysian dismantling of traditional constraints, coupled with the falsely Apollonian pursuit of angelic compassion (to borrow a useful polarity from Joseph Epstein), led not to blissful freedom and utopian harmony but to hellish confusion and emptiness. And, until now, I was unaware that their story had been told, or even identified.

As an introduction to *Footprints in the Snow of the Moon*, however, this formulation is unfairly abstract. Harris is a maker of fictions *par excellence* who understands that the most effective "novel of ideas" is the one that takes place entirely in the soul as an arena of spiritual battle: the soul of a real human person. And Anthony Toole is such a person, as are his parents, his younger brother, his younger sister, and especially the two women in his life, Celine and Gina, as well as his corporeal enemy but spiritual friend, Richard. Anthony hardly even realizes what the real struggle within himself is but ultimately learns that what he wants is to be a *good* man, a moral man, at a point in history when the official doctrine of his generation's "intellectuals" is that the whole distinction between good and evil is a mere social construct. The powerful psychological and spiritual tension that is, almost incredibly, maintained on every page derives from this gap, the one that separates "Tonio's" pursuit of the ancient quest for the Holy Grail, requiring sacrifice and patience, from the pursuit of pleasure *now* and "social justice" *now* all around him.

Not that Tonio is pulled *in* that direction. But Celine and Gina, whose lives are interwoven with his more significantly than anyone else's, are, unbeknownst to themselves, placed in false positions by the *Zeitgeist*: Celine because, as a *truly* natural woman, she is temperamentally at odds with the bogus naturalism of the "movement"; and Gina because, as an exponent and champion of feminist ideology, she paints herself into an inevitable corner of unhappiness. The real triumph of the novel is that these two women are far from being embodiments of concepts: They are thoroughly living beings. Celine's yearning sense of beauty and deep-rooted guilt live in her emerald eyes and strawberry-blond hair, while Gina's wit, brilliance, and willfully suppressed desire for truth and real love scintillate in her black locks, deep brown eyes, and queenly elegance of manner. The temptation with which Tonio is confronted in the climactic scene of the novel, the unforgettable reception for foreign diplomats at the state capitol in Austin, is rendered as concrete and real as the bizarre landscape of Lake Wachita as seen from Eagle Rock.

Thus, the novel is not a screed against the Baby Boomers but is partly generated by a righteous and entirely justified anger at the depredations of feminist ideology, which has never been so well dissected since Chesterton wrote "Feminism, or the Mistake About Women" in *What's Wrong With the World* in 1910. It is precisely because Harris has a light touch and touches only tangentially on the impact of the new "ideas" (actually, mere justifications for desires, as he shows) on real people that the force of the insights is so deeply felt. Tonio is even aware of the potential unfairness of turning actual people into living symbols of the attitudes he has come to hate, as when a hospital nurse questions him about Celine's suicide attempt and he assumes her to be categorizing him as one of the standard "cultural enemies" of feminist thought—the male whose insensitivity drives the woman to suicide. He is surprised, however, when she shows him some real sympathy. She is human, after all. Later, when feeling particularly alone, he even contemplates seeking her out for comfort! So Harris evades the trap of becoming an ideologue—or counter-ideologue—himself. His characters are human, and so is he.

There are lesser delights in this novel as well. On one level, the book joins the ranks of academic dystopias, as its hero passes from graduate student to dorm warden to become, eventually, a counselor in the state university system of Texas; and yet nowhere in the Groves does he encounter what he yearns to find, which is real culture. He thinks he encounters it, ironically, at the thoroughly artificial reception at the state capitol, where, under the influence of champagne and cognac, he is delighted by the banter of the various diplomatic personnel. And, in fact, he is right, to this extent: They keep alive a kind of traditional sense of cultivated decorum that has been thrown, lock, stock, and barrel, out of the quon-

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dam Ivory Tower.

I did find myself wishing that Tonio, having learned the hard way that there is such a thing as sin and that one must fight against it, might take the next step by looking into religion. Instead, he briefly expresses the view that the Church is just as bad as secularism, and so tries to maintain his "independence"—not grasping, apparently, that he is performing a variation on an error for which he had accurately indicted the "new women" of the day, with their false conception of autonomy. This is the only point at which I am a bit disappointed with Harris's protagonist. But maybe I am being unfair—asking for a different book, or even a sequel comparable to the conversion novels of Joris-Karl Huysmans, which is not at all what Harris has in mind.

Anyway, this is a good novel—perhaps even a great one. It belongs on anybody's short list of books that have a chance of passing into a future canon of works exploring the effects moral decadence has had on American society.

Jonathan Chaves is a professor of Chinese Literature at George Washington University.

LIBERAL ARTS

MEXICAN LESSONS IN DEMOCRACY

"Although affirming that he is not worried about evil spells that they could do against his political party, the local legislator Ángel Deschamps Falcón clarified that his proposed legislation to outlaw witchcraft was not aimed at legitimate practitioners, but at charlatans.

"He even sent an invitation to the witches of the region to sit and negotiate to create the legislation together, with the intention that the witches of both black and white magic would not be prejudiced legally.

"Then two of those witches, The Diabolical and The Tiger, launched a message to the National Action Party: Terminate your legislative proposal that tries to make witchcraft a crime, or you'll be the object of evil spells that will affect you in the next elections."

—*translated from an August 27, 2003, article in* El Universal

Who Will Judge the Judges?

by William J. Quirk and William J. Watkins, Jr.

The People Themselves: Popular Constitutionalism and Judicial Review
by Larry D. Kramer
New York: Oxford University Press; 363 pp., $29.95

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Abraham Lincoln, in his 1860 Cooper Union speech, asked, "What is the frame of government under which we live?" The answer must be, he said, the Constitution of the United States. The answer today, as *Chronicles*' reviewer of Quirk's and Bridewell's *Judicial Dictatorship* stated in 1995, is a judicial dictatorship imposed by the Supreme Court. If 80 percent of the people want to try term limits to make Congress more responsive, the idea must be presented to the Court for approval or rejection. The same goes for school vouchers, campaign-finance reform, and so on. The Court now decides all kinds of questions that used to be left to the legislature. May the President conduct a "War on Terror"? The Court now tells him what rights he must allow to his captives, though, in all preceding wars, it had deferred to the executive. The Court now stands astride the country like a colossus.

The imperial judiciary, though, has suddenly come under heavy attack. On July 22, the House of Representatives passed the Marriage Protection Act (H.R. 3313), which would remove the "gay marriage" issue from the Supreme Court's docket. Of course, if you can put "gay marriage" off limits to the Court, you can do the same with any other kind of case: All it takes is a statute passed by Congress and signed by the president. Indeed, the 2004 Republican platform proposes removing a few other things from the Court's docket by "using Article III of the Constitution to limit federal court jurisdiction" over cases trying to delete "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance and those prohibiting public depictions of the Ten Commandments. On the heels of these developments, the press reports that Karl Rove's current reading includes Larry D. Kramer's *The People Themselves*, published last July. In this book, Kramer, dean of the Stanford Law School, makes a comprehensive attack on judicial supremacy. Judge Richard A. Posner, in his review in the *New Republic* (July 19), notes that Kramer is one of a small band of "mainly left-leaning law professors" from such elite schools as Georgetown and New York University who, within the past four or five years, have challenged judicial supremacy. Is the imperial judiciary falling out of favor with respectable opinionmakers?

The imperial judiciary finds support in neither the text of the Constitution nor the history of our country's founding, while contravening the philosophies of all our great presidents. The Founding Fathers' revolutionary ideology was formed in a bloody eight-year war to get rid of the English and their king. In Philadelphia in 1787, a people, for the first time in history, deliberately constructed a form of government of their own choosing. Is it reasonable to think that Washington, Franklin, Hamilton, and Madison wished to live under rules imposed by an unelected court? Clearly not, for, if any one "co-equal" branch was intended to be supreme, it is Congress. As James Madison noted in *Federalist* 51, "In republican government the legislative authority, necessarily, predominates." This only makes sense. The legislature crafts the rules and regulations for society. Also, because members of the popular branch of the legislature are typically chosen from small districts with short election cycles, they are more in touch with local circumstances and are more susceptible to censure should they violate the people's trust. In Article I, we see that Congress's authority far eclipses that of the other branches. Congress, for example, has the power to raise and spend money, declare war, impeach members of the other two branches, and control the Supreme Court's appellate jurisdiction.

Viewed in the light of history and the text of the Constitution itself, the acceptance of judicial supremacy in modern times is astonishing. Congress, if it chose, could abolish all federal courts except the Supreme Court, and it could reduce that Court's jurisdiction to only those cases affecting ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, and ones to which a state is a party. Except for guaranteeing the bare existence of the Supreme Court—with the minor jurisdiction mentioned—the Constitution authorizes Congress to establish and regulate the judicial system. Congress controls such matters as how

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many judges make up the Court, its budget, what writs it may issue, how much its members are paid, and what appeals from state courts it may hear.

Hamilton, in *Federalist* 78, noted that the Court has "no influence over sword or purse" and it must rely on the aid of the executive even for the enforcement of its orders. He concluded that

> the judicial is beyond comparison the weakest of three departments of power; it can never attack with success either of the other two and that all possible care is requisite to enable it to defend itself against their attacks.

To give the judiciary the final say on constitutional matters would, in Jefferson's words, make it "a despotic branch." Jefferson recognized that a final arbiter was needed if the three branches could not work out their differences on certain issues. However, his final arbiter was not the federal government but the people of the several states. Jefferson envisioned the people acting in their elective capacities or in conventions as the final decisionmakers on issues of constitutional law.

Our great presidents have all rejected judicial supremacy—Jefferson, Madison, Jackson, Lincoln, and both Roosevelts. Lincoln, in his First Inaugural Address, said that

> A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations and always changing easily, with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people. Whoever rejects it does of necessity, fly to anarchy or despotism . . . [I]f the policy of the government upon vital questions affecting the whole people is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court the instant they are made in ordinary litigation between parties in personal actions, the people will have ceased to be their own rulers, having to that extent practically resigned their Government into the hands of that eminent tribunal.

Judicial supremacy is antithetical to the republican form of government. It is a constitutional oxymoron, Jefferson wrote on April 20, 1806, to make "any branch independent of the nation." Just where did such an exotic plant come from, and what has been holding it up? More importantly, what, specifically, can be done to end it? Kramer, disappointingly, is incurious about the first and vague about the second:

> Sometime in the past generation or so (it is impossible to pinpoint a moment in what was, after all, a gradual process), Americans came to believe that the meaning of their Constitution is something that should be left to others. Constitutional history was recast . . . as a story of judicial triumphalism.

He tries again a few pages later:

> A broad change in public attitudes toward the Court occurred in the latter half of the twentieth century . . . How and why this change came about is a complicated story . . . But whatever the explanation there can be little doubt [that a change occurred].

Kramer appears to be contemplating an "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" theory—people go to sleep as good democrats but wake up as judicial supremacists.

The reality is not that complicated. Because blacks were politically excluded, the judiciary was the only branch available that could bring racial justice to the country. What began as a necessity continued as a convenience. An entire generation of constitutional-law scholars became so taken with the Court's results that, in the process, they evolved voluminous and elaborate rationalizations to justify the Court's expanded authority. Additionally, the political branches learned the surprising lesson that they could gain power by ceding power. The hot-button cultural issues—*e.g.* race, sex, religion, and abortion—are so controversial that a large number of voters will be alienated no matter which way their representatives vote. Incumbents came to believe, reasonably enough, that, if they could avoid being forced to take sides on such volatile issues, their reelection would be more likely. The unelected Supreme Court, whose members have lifetime tenure, became (and remain) willing to take on the issues. The justices have become celebrities. As the Court is increasingly recognized as just another political branch, however, great costs have been incurred. The Founding Fathers would have a hard time understanding why the future makeup of the Supreme Court was a major issue in the 2004 presidential election.

Kramer persuasively argues for an end to judicial supremacy: "The Supreme Court is not the highest authority in the land on constitutional law. We are." He is not clear on how "we" should express ourselves, however. What does it mean, Judge Posner asks, to say the people are the "authoritative tribunal"? The "very concept is barely intelligible." Is Kramer suggesting that judges be impeached if the people disagree with an opinion?

The big news is that practical, everyday people are working hard right now to bring the colossus down. The House of Representatives, in passing H.R. 3313, is attempting to reassert legislative control of the Court by limiting the kinds of cases the Supreme Court may hear. What Congress does next depends on how the Court responds. The Court may be conciliatory, or we may be headed directly into a constitutional crisis

The fight over judicial supremacy, Kramer rightly points out, amounts to the latest battle in the old war between Hamiltonians and Jeffersonians. The Hamiltonians are deeply ambivalent toward democracy; while committed to the notion of popular rule, they are pessimistic about the outcome and anxious to hedge it. Jeffersonians, on the other hand, are optimistic about self-rule: "They see risks, but are not persuaded that the risks justify circumscribing popular control by overtly undemocratic means." Democracy, Jefferson said, is more than a political system—it is a way of life, an attitude toward people. As he put it, governments are republican "in proportion as they embody the will of the people and execute it." A country run by the majority is not a perfect society; it is sometimes foolish, sometimes callous, but it will never intentionally work against its own interest. And, as Jefferson said, it will be as good as the people.

William J. Quirk is a professor at the University of South Carolina School of Law. William J. Watkins is an attorney in Greenville, South Carolina, and the author of Reclaiming the American Revolution: The Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions and Their Legacy.

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by Samuel Francis

You Say You Want a Revolution

With a none-too-whopping lunch of 51 percent of the popular vote packed into their bellies, the nation's "conservatives" quibbled and preached to one another about the true meaning of the 2004 presidential election even before the 51 percent had made it all the way down their political esophagus. "Now comes the revolution," beamed Richard A. Viguerie, a faded star of the first (New Right) revolution that never quite happened back in the 1980's, to a small clutch of "movement conservatives" in Arlington, Virginia, on election night. "If you don't implement a conservative agenda now, when do you?" Mr. Viguerie—and other conservatives—may not really want an answer to that question, but they will soon get one.

As the *New York Times* noted two days after the election, conservatives were ebullient about Mr. Bush's victory—and why not? For some little while, it was beginning to look like the President would go the way of Lyndon Johnson and Jimmy Carter, with John Kerry ousting him and his neoconservative war wonks from the West Wing and sending the whole crusade for global democracy back to the *Commentary* editorial offices. Mr. Bush's last-minute and razor-thin victory erased those thoughts. "Movement" stalwarts who, a few months before, were vowing not to vote for Mr. Bush and refusing to applaud him even when he graced their own fundraising dinners now swooned in delight at the mass affirmation of their doctrines they imagined the election implied.

And maybe it does, but the brute fact, whether the movementites remembered or not, was that, up to the very morning of the election, no one could accurately predict what would happen—especially the conservatives. The *Washington Post* two days before the election, published the projections of several conservative and neoconservative pundits, and every one of them was wrong, with some, like neocon Bill Kristol, foreseeing vast landslides of more than 300 electoral votes for the President. In any case, Mr. Bush won by the smallest possible margin and by carrying one big state—call it Florida or Ohio. Had he lost either, he would have lost the election, and he won each of them by margins no larger than his national average. The President's final victory last year was therefore almost as unimpressive as his previous one in 2000. In that year, with only 47 percent of the popular vote, he would have lost outright had Ralph Nader not taken votes from Al Gore. As an incumbent wartime president with no major scandal or economic depression, Mr. Bush should have smashed John Kerry with landslides like those won by Richard Nixon in 1972 and Ronald Reagan in 1984, but his slim and unpredictable victory last year means not only that there is no national consensus whatsoever behind him or his policies but that his reelection was, in fact, a moral defeat for him and those very policies. If the "emerging Republican majority" can do no better than 47 percent of the popular vote one election and 51 percent the next, the GOP is in deep trouble. To say Mr. Bush now has a "mandate," as Vice President Cheney was quick to insist and as every movementite in the country eager to clamber on board was soon braying, is absurd on its face.

What *does* the reelection of George W. Bush mean for the American right, however that term is defined? Before the election, observers as diverse as Pat Buchanan and the *New Republic*'s Franklin Foer were intimating that it would mean a "civil war" inside the Republican Party, as Mr. Buchanan predicted in his recent book, or would lead "antiwar conservatives" to break with the Republican Party entirely, as Mr. Foer suggested. Someone needs to tell Mr. Foer that most of them did that long ago. I can count on one hand the serious conservatives I know who supported George W. Bush this year—or in 2000, for that matter.

Of course, as Mr. Bush becomes a lame duck, there will be a struggle for the next nomination, and there might even be some superficial ideological distinctions among the contenders. But neoconservative Kenneth Weinstein, head of the Hudson Institute, was probably more accurate in his assessment the day after the election. "Certainly," he wheezed to the *New York Times*, "we have avoided the blood bath in the Republican Party that would have taken place if Mr. Bush had been defeated." The need to avoid bloodbaths is always a watchword for oligarchies, and the Bush victory, however narrow and however meaningless as a "mandate," at least entrenched the neoconservatives in the power positions that they have occupied for the last four years. Some may go and some may come, but there was no reason to think they would abandon a ship that still floats, let alone that the captain would throw them overboard. Neoconservative columnist Charles Krauthammer was quick to claim that the election meant a "referendum on the Bush doctrine," and, while it was certainly no such thing, the effect of the President's reelection will surely be the preservation of neoconservative hegemony of the American right, as well as of the federal government.

In that sense, Mr. Bush's reelection is a disaster for radical conservatism. That should be obvious in the realm of foreign policy. Every rumble from the conservative press and from inside Cabal Headquarters at the Pentagon is that Iran is next on the liberation menu, through a strike by Israel or the United States herself at her nuclear facilities or, sooner or later, a full-scale war. Such major neoconservative pundits as Norman Podhoretz, Michael Ledeen, Frank Gaffney, and others have been badgering for more war in the Middle East for years, and, with the impending departure of Colin Powell, there is no one in the Bush administration who can offer much resistance. It is also unlikely that we will hear any more about the FBI investigation of Israeli espionage inside the Pentagon. Treason has every expectation of a bull market.

Foreign policy is what the neocons care most about, but their continued control is likely in other areas of policy, too. According to exit polls, Mr. Bush won some 44 percent of the Hispanic vote in

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the election, more than any other Republican president in history, and that factoid was immediately seized by the Open Borders lobby (mainly neoconservatives and libertarians on the political right) to argue against any further support for immigration control. In early 2004, Mr. Bush unveiled what amounted to a massive amnesty for illegal aliens, and, while the amnesty vanished in Congress, Mr. Bush revived it after the election. The lesson the administration and many Republicans have drawn from the exit polls is that amnesty and support for mass immigration wins Hispanic votes and yields victory, and the Open Borders propagandists have led them to that conclusion.

If that means that pandering pays, maybe they are right, but the exit polls need to be scrutinized more carefully. In the first place, as was soon notorious in last year's election, the exit polls turned out to be simply wrong in many cases. In the case of Hispanics, however, they may be closer to the truth. A preelection poll in Florida put Mr. Bush's support at some 61 percent among Hispanics, and the exit polls on Election Day reported that it was 56 percent, so there is not that much difference. (Then again, they may not be so accurate, since some exit polls of Hispanic voters showed Mr. Bush doing even less well among them last year than he did in 2000.) In any case, the President's supposedly swollen Hispanic numbers came mainly from Florida and Texas, where he has long and significant personal and political connections. In the other two major locations of Hispanic voting power, California and New York, his increased share of the Hispanic vote was considerably less. If amnesty and soft immigration policies had been the reasons for the increase, the exit polls would have shown a similar rise in those two states as well.

Moreover, in Arizona, where a ballot measure directed against welfare and voting for illegal immigrants passed by 60 percent, 47 percent of the state's Hispanics supported it. The unspoken assumption of the Open Borders lobby is that any and all immigration control will alienate all Hispanic voters, but that is just not true. Immigration restrictionists did well also in their congressional races last year, and their leader, Rep. Tom Tancredo of Colorado, won with some 60 percent of the vote in his district despite heavily funded opposition and virtually no support from the Bush administration, which has told him he is not welcome in the White House. If there was a lesson about immigration from this election, it was that immigration control pays, not amnesty and pandering, but it is not the lesson the White House or the Stupid Party is likely to learn.

If it's a mandate you are looking for, "moral issues" are more plausible, though how much they have to do with Mr. Bush and his brood is an open question. Just after the election, the *Washington Post* ran a sizeable story showing how the campaign against "gay marriage" in various state referenda was engineered, not by the White House or the Republican Party, but by the evangelicals themselves. The White House and the Stupid Party did not want to push the issue at all, though they were the main beneficiaries of it. The revulsion against "gay marriage" is, of course, hardly a moral or social counterrevolution, but it is a clear indication that white Christian voters are now willing to say no to further moral erosion and to use political power to say it. The strength of the "moral issue" in the 2004 election confirms that the long-term historical and social process I have previously called the "Middle American Revolution" still flourishes.

It flourishes in the only place it can really ever take place—among Middle Americans themselves, which is what all the media catchphrases about "Red America" mean. The salience of the moral issue, as well as the positive response to immigration-control measures and candidates and even, in a perverse sense, to the "War on Terror" and the war with Iraq, all point to a serious rightward and antiestablishment trend in the country, rather further to the right and more antiestablishment than the Bush White House, the GOP leadership, and the neoconservative mafia would like. Quite aside from the very obvious flaws, moral and strategic, of the war in Iraq, a good deal of popular support for it derives from the perfectly healthy, natural, and normal instincts—national, religious, and racial—of Americans who have seen the country attacked in a massive, brutal, and sneaky act of terror and who understandably want blood revenge. The background of the September 11 attacks in our Middle East policies and the exact role and meaning of Saddam Hussein and Iraq are matters of information and misinformation, not principle. Much of the mass sentiment that supports the war in Iraq, in other words, is sound, despite its manipulation and exploitation by the government and the neocons for their own unsound and sinister purposes.

And that, of course, is why there will and can be no revolution, moral or otherwise, in America as a result of this last election. The forces that benefit from the election do not want a revolution and have no intention of leading one. What they want is what Republicans since at least the days of Richard Nixon have always wanted: to exploit the healthy and conservative instincts of Middle Americans in order to put themselves in office. If that were all that was wrong with the last election, we could perhaps overlook it, but today, there is more.

Today, the neoconservatives have succeeded in attaching themselves to the social and political forces of the Middle American Revolution and to at least some of the sentiments that animate it, including patriotism and moral traditionalism. At the same time, they have managed to paint paleoconservatives who oppose the war as "unpatriotic"—not without the assistance of some on the antiwar right, especially libertarians, who love to wallow with genuinely anti-American icons and images and such dubious characters as Gore Vidal and Noam Chomsky. The neoconservative success in this respect is significant, because by co-opting "patriotism," they have managed to give themselves what they have never previously been able to gain: a national constituency through a national political vehicle (the Republican Party) that can mobilize the constituency to retain national power. And neoconservatives will retain power as long as they remain able to preserve the illusion that they are the real voices of American patriotism. They will no longer be a mere attachment to whatever court they can creep into but will become a significant—and dominant—political force in their own right.

Mr. Bush's victory last November does not by any means signify the end of radical conservatism, though no one should delude himself that it represents anything close to its triumph. What the election proves is that there persists a powerful and healthy determination among the American electorate to conserve its cultural, moral, and national being—its identity. What it also proves, however, is that the enemies of that very identity and those who are simply indifferent to its existence and survival are more than capable of capturing and using it for their own purposes. What the election should teach the real American right is that its principal mission is to separate those enemies from the people they have conquered. c

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by Scott P. Richert

Bleeding Red, Feeling Blue

When I started this column back in January 2001 (as a "Letter From Rockford"), the United States had just emerged from a presidential election that made this country look anything but united. Red and Blue, until then simply convenient colors used by the television networks to designate which party's candidate had captured the electoral votes of each state, had become political metaphors representing, respectively, the values of the Middle American heartland—God, guns, lower taxes, the preservation of life, both in the womb and at its end—and the values, or lack thereof, of coastal America—New York, Hollywood, higher taxes, and rights modified by various adjectives, from abortion to gay to immigrants'.

As the 2004 presidential race drew to a close, every pundit was offering his predictions about whether Senator Kerry had overcome his liberal image enough to make inroads in Red America and whether President Bush had demonstrated sufficient leadership to do the same in the Blue. In the end, though, the map looked remarkably similar to that of 2000.

And so, after Senator Kerry's concession, the Red *versus* Blue debates continued in earnest, bolstered by exit polls that showed that 22 percent of voters nationwide named "moral values" as the most important issue in the race. Seventy-nine percent of those voters had cast their ballots for President Bush. Karl Rove, a Bloomberg report claimed, had spent four years "cultivating church leaders who could help lure back to the voting booths the 4 million evangelical Christians who Rove believed had ditched Bush in 2000 because he had a drunk-driving record."

Rove's strategy clearly worked, but nowhere in the Bloomberg article is there any indication that Rove himself feels strongly about any of the issues that voters grouped under the label of "moral values"—abortion, "homosexual marriage," euthanasia. In fact, there is no indication that Rove even acknowledges the concept except as a political tool, as his post-election appearance on NBC's *Meet the Press*, in which he tried to downplay the role of moral values in the election, showed. While the Bush campaign's most important weapon was clearly the initiatives and referenda in 11 states banning "homosexual marriage," Rove seems to have wanted to avoid that issue altogether, embracing it only once he realized how strongly it was playing on the ground.

In other words, Rove's "moral values" strategy was pure Machiavellianism, although Machiavelli was undoubtedly a more moral man than Rove. The proof lies in the administration's approach to "homosexual marriage." The administration could have supported Indiana Congressman John Hostettler's H.R. 3313, which would have removed the jurisdiction of the federal courts over any cases challenging the Defense of Marriage Act. Instead, it pursued a Federal Marriage Amendment that everyone knew had no chance of passing Congress. Everyone, that is, except for the voters on the ground, who would interpret the amendment's failure the way that Rove wanted: George Bush understands your concerns, but the evil Democrats in the House and Senate want to force "homosexual marriage" on the American people.

If the administration had backed H.R. 3313 and put its weight behind a companion Senate bill, the drive for "homosexual marriage" would have hit a brick wall. That would have taken the wind out of the sails of the state initiatives and referenda, however, possibly reducing turnout or, worse, allowing voters to elevate the economy, which 20 percent of voters named the most important issue, to first place. And that would have spelled disaster for the Bush reelection campaign.

When the economy is named the most important issue by a plurality of voters, as it was in 1992, incumbent presidents lose reelection. That clearly would have been the case here. Ohio's "homosexual marriage" referendum turned out voters for President Bush, even though only *three percent* of Ohio voters characterized the economy as excellent and 38 percent, as good. That's not surprising: One quarter of all jobs lost over the past four years have been in Ohio, and, as in the rest of the industrial Midwest, those jobs have disproportionately been higher-paying manufacturing positions with decent benefits.

Which brings us back to that infamous map. Other than a few neoconmen such as David Brooks and Jonah Goldberg, on whom the words "moral values" have the same effect as holy water on a vampire, most Republican strategists recognize a good thing when they see it. Lacking even a rhetorical difference from the Democrats on almost any other substantive issue, the Republicans hope to parlay *this* rhetorical difference into a greater "moral majority." Never mind that, as I wrote in this column in March 2001:

> At the end of George W. Bush's four or eight years as President, *Roe* v. *Wade* will still be the law of the land, more states will have recognized homosexual "marriages," more American businesses will have moved overseas, more women and homosexuals will have joined the military, more Americans will have died while killing innocent civilians in countries we have no business attacking, multiculturalism and bilingualism will have increased their hold on American education . . . , and immigration—both illegal and legal—will have increased."

While voters concerned about the economy tend to demand tangible results, many—perhaps most—voters concerned about moral values seem willing to settle for rhetoric.

Democrats, for the most part, have tried to downplay the role of "moral values" and have run the electoral map through a series of greater and greater revisions to "prove" that the country is primarily Purple, not Red—and everyone knows, of course, that Purple is just a deeper shade of Blue. The broadest expanses of Purple, however, show up not in the Northeast

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and on the West Coast—the true Democratic strongholds—but in the Upper Midwest, an area that neither party really understands, but one which, for the foreseeable future, will be the primary battleground in presidential elections.

And it is here in the Upper Midwest that Red and Blue as a moral metaphor breaks down. The states of the Upper Midwest share the values of the mass of Red states to their south and west. (Since the states of the Upper Midwest have higher concentrations of Catholics and Lutherans, there are some differences, but the differences are not as great as those between the Upper Midwest and the other Blue states.) And that's largely true even within large Midwestern cities, which John Kerry won by a healthy margin, because a sizable percentage of the white residents of those cities are the "Reagan Democrats" of yore, a significant number of whom Bill Clinton managed to woo back home. The Rust Belt continues to trend Democratic for other reasons, primarily economic. The past four years have been devastating to the industrial Midwest. The next four years hardly look better, and not simply because President Bush was reelected. On trade and other economic issues related to manufacturing, the Democratic Party today is simply a pale reflection of the Republican Party. Neither even begins to approach the modicum of economic realism that marked the first six years of the Reagan administration, before the neocons and the free-trade ideologues and multinational corporations won out.

It is only fair to point out that manufacturing, like the rest of the economy, was hit hard by the terrorist attacks of September 2001. In April of that year, however, I wrote a column entitled "A Month in the Life of the Industrial Midwest," in which I chronicled the job losses in the Rockford area for one month, starting on January 21, the day after President Bush's inauguration: "In 30 short days, the Rockford area lost two businesses, well over 4,000 manufacturing jobs, and over 100 retail sales positions." And that turned out to be just the tip of the iceberg: During President Bush's first term, the Rockford area lost over 20 percent of its manufacturing jobs (over 11,200, at last count) and dozens of manufacturers, large and small.

This dramatic decline in manufacturing began in the middle of 1998, but the problem, not only for the long-term economic health of the industrial Midwest but for the political viability of the Republican Party, is that the Bush administration really did nothing to stem the tide. In fact, the steel tariffs that the administration imposed arguably *accelerated* the decline of small manufacturing, since, over the past 20 years, domestic steel production has dropped to the point that it cannot meet domestic steel consumption. Small manufacturers, reliant on foreign steel, found that the tariff increased their costs to the point that they could not compete with foreign manufacturers, who didn't have to pay those tariffs.

During the campaign, President Bush made numerous stops in manufacturing towns in the Upper Midwest, and his message was always the same: *The economy is going through some changes. Change is good, but change is hard. You can be retrained. Don't worry if you only have enough savings to pay your mortgage for the next three months: Washington is here to help.*

During a live broadcast of Bush delivering one of these speeches in Janesville, Wisconsin, a few weeks before GM announced a four-week layoff at its assembly plant there, President Bush explained that his administration's economic plan for manufacturing consisted primarily of funds for retraining, more support for vocational training at community colleges, and increased Pell Grants. As he droned on, the applause decreased dramatically, even though the speech was delivered to an invitation-only crowd of local Republicans. Imagine the effect it had on the swing voters—those Reagan Democrats who know that their days building Suburbans at the GM plant are numbered.

Assuming that the Northeast and the West Coast remain Blue (and, in all likelihood, they are going to become even Bluer, as their moral decline continues), a Republican presidential candidate needs to win at least one state out of Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and Pennsylvania (which, in its western half at least, is closer economically and morally to the industrial Midwest than to the Northeast). That means appealing to those Reagan Democrats. "Moral values" will obviously be an important part of that appeal (as they were for Reagan), but ignoring the importance of a sound economic policy based on manufacturing and relying primarily on moral issues to drive the vote in these states is a risky proposition. As Tom Fleming has noted, as a political issue, "homosexual marriage" seems to have spawned more public opposition than abortion has in the past. Part of that may simply be the novelty of it all, but more likely it has to do with abortion being essentially a private act, while "homosexual marriage" is nothing if not public. By 2008, however, the issue of "homosexual marriage" is likely to be resolved, one way or another. There are cases already making their way up through the federal courts, and it would take some rather tortured legal reasoning for the Supreme Court not to accept the Full Faith and Credit argument and legalize homosexual marriage everywhere. (In fact, this is a case where strict constructionism and Justice Scalia's fondness for "democratic solutions" works against traditional morality.) That wouldn't mean that every state would be required to *perform* "homosexual marriages"; each would, however, have to *recognize* "homosexual marriages" contracted in other states.

With "homosexual marriage" thus removed from the front burner pretty definitively, abortion would likely become the dominant moral issue once more, and, unless the industrial Midwest has experienced an economic recovery that is not yet really evident on the horizon, the entire region may return to the Democratic fold. Again, it wouldn't be because Midwesterners—even urban ones—are like the soulless Manhattanites and Californians who gave their votes to John Kerry but because the very public and visible economic issues are likely to trump the more private issue of abortion.

And so, while the Republican Party is still crowing about its victory, it may already have planted the seeds of its future defeat. Of course, it might continue to win elections for a while, aided by a national Democratic Party that now appears as stupid as it is evil, but if it cannot—or, more correctly, will not—provide the Reagan Democrats in the industrial Midwest with an economic policy to match its moral rhetoric, the decline of manufacturing may well accelerate, driving these critical states further into Democratic arms. Unless the Republican Party stops wrapping its pandering to multinational corporations in the high-sounding rhetoric of an ideological commitment to free trade and truly begins to address the continuing economic devastation of the industrial Midwest (and, by extension, the rest of the country), future presidential election maps are likely to look pretty much the same as they did this year—only a little more Blue. c

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Letter From Iraq

by Scott Taylor

Five Days in Hell, Part One

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It was nearly dusk on September 7, when we arrived at the outskirts of Tal Afar, Iraq. On the main highway to Mosul, about a dozen Iraqi policemen at a checkpoint were supervising a frightened exodus of civilian refugees. For the past week, there had been media reports of escalating violence between resistance fighters and U.S. troops in Tal Afar, and already many of the residents had fled the embattled city. From American services in the Mosul Airfield, I had learned earlier that day that a major U.S. offensive was about to begin. The Americans had reinforced their local garrison with an additional battalion of armor and infantry, and I was advised that, within days, the U.S. military was going to "clean house" in Tal Afar.

I intended to enter the city before it was shut down and then send reports about the civilian casualties and possible humanitarian crisis that would result from a major battle. I knew there would be some risk involved—particularly once the Americans attacked—but I planned to observe the fighting from a safe house, well away from any actual combat.

The sight of U.S.-paid Iraqi police forces monitoring traffic had seemed like a good sign that things were still under control, despite the recent fighting. As I did not have an exact address for my previous contact, I approached a police checkpoint to ask for assistance. When I asked to be taken "to Doctor Yashar," they recognized his name as a prominent local Turkmen official and eagerly nodded in the affirmative. A senior policeman was summoned, and he instructed me and Zeynep Tugrul, a Turkish journalist who was serving as my translator, to climb into a nearby car containing four masked gunman. As we clambered into the backseat, one of the gunmen said, in excellent English, "We will take you to Doctor Yashar—please, do not be afraid."

I had presumed that these men were some sort of special police force—our own Canadian counterterrorist teams often wear ski masks—so I had no immediate cause for concern. However, as soon as we entered Tal Afar, I saw that the streets were full of similarly masked resistance fighters armed with Kalashnikov rifles and rocket-propelled grenades (RPG's). I suddenly realized that we were in the hands of the resistance. We were ushered into a small courtyard outside a walled two-story building housing about a half-dozen armed men.

As soon as the metal door clanged shut behind us, the English-speaking leader said, "You are spies, and now you are prisoners." All of our cameras, equipment, and identification were confiscated, and we were told to sit on a mat with our backs to the wall. "The Americans will attack soon, and I have to see to my men," said our captor. "I will deal with you when I return."

Shortly after nightfall, they brought a platter of food into the compound, and, in what would soon become a routine pattern, they served us first before eating dinner themselves. I did not have much of an appetite.

The plates had just been cleared away when another car pulled up outside and four new gunmen came quickly through the door. Before I could even react, I was pulled to my feet and pressed against the wall with my hands on top of my head. Almost immediately, I heard the distinct sound of a Kalashnikov being cocked about a meter behind me. In fear and shock at the realization that they were about to execute me, Zeynep screamed in Turkish: "Don't shoot him—he has a son!"

The outburst was enough to distract them momentarily, and they began to explain to her the necessity of killing a "Jewish spy." Thankfully, I had no idea what was being said. The brief discussion was still taking place when our original captor returned. Harsh words were exchanged between the two groups of gunmen, and it seemed as though a prisoner's fate was the proprietorship of those who made the capture: The would-be executioners left.

About two hours later, I was blindfolded and roughly manhandled into what felt to be an SUV. At the second house, I was rushed through several doorways and up several stairs. With my hands tied behind my back and unable to see, I stumbled and fell several times, only to be pulled brusquely back to my feet and once again shoved forward. "Hurry, hurry, you bastard Jew," whispered one of my guards as he slammed my head into a door frame.

I was forced to lie facedown on a mat, and two men carefully searched through my pockets. Finding my money inside my sock (about $700), they laughed and said, "Your money is our money—you won't need cash in heaven."

It was difficult to gauge how long I laid there in the dark, but my shoulders were aching when they finally untied my hands and brought me to another room for interrogation. My blindfold was removed, and they shone a bright flashlight directly in my eyes. "Which intelligence agency are you working for?" For about one hour, I did my best to explain to them that I was a journalist. Two men were questioning me. In what seemed like a bad Hollywood comedy, someone fired up a generator outside, the lights came on, and the two interrogators clumsily tried to pull their ski masks back on before I could recognize their faces.

With the tension broken, the one who had identified himself as "*emir*" (leader) actually started to laugh and left his mask off. This man had been among the group that had taken us at the police checkpoint. "Sleep now, and I will check your story. If you are telling the truth, we will release you; if not, you die."

I was kicked awake the following morning, rolled onto my stomach, blindfolded, and bound. They transported Zeynep and me to a the third house, where our blindfolds were removed, and we were fed a generous breakfast of fried eggs and flat bread. After a cup of tea, I was escorted to a small room with barred windows. Two middle-aged men and a 15-year-old boy, who stated that his only ambition in life was to "die a martyr," stood guard. They were obviously not frontline *mujahideen*, but they still supported the resistance.

Shortly past dark, the *emir* returned and informed us that he had confirmed that we were not spies. He gave a "Muslim promise" to set us free in the morning. On this night, Zeynep and I would remain his "guests." We were also about to become front-row spectators to an in-

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tense battle between the resistance and U.S. forces.

Just past midnight, the American Apache helicopters attacked. Their arrival over Tal Afar was greeted by a heavy barrage of RPG and cannon fire. From inside the workshop's courtyard, we could not see the battle's progress, but, from the sounds of the gunfire, we could plot its course. On several occasions, the *mujahideen* all across the city screamed, "*Allahu akbar! Allahu akbar!*" ("God is great!") I had first thought that these cries were in response to the downing of a helicopter, but our young guard explained that they were cheering the deaths of their own, newly created martyrs.

At about 3 A.M., there was a loud banging on the courtyard gate. Our guards let a resistance fighter inside, and he spoke quickly with them in Turkish. Hurriedly, a storeroom was opened, and the fighter helped himself to three RPG's, which he tucked inside his belt. I could see inside the small room, which was literally packed with munitions, and I realized that we were being held captive in one of the resistance's ammo depots. The fighter took a bowl of water, drank thirstily, then rushed back out onto the darkened streets. Minutes later, he began firing from a rooftop about 50 meters away. He had only managed to launch two of his rockets before he disappeared in a burst of 25 mm cannon fire from an Apache that literally blew him into pieces. Following a brief silence came the chorus of "*Allahu Akbar!*"

In the morning, Tal Afar was strangely quiet, except for the continuous buzzing of the unmanned Predators overhead. The Apaches were gone, and the resistance was licking its wounds. It was reported that 50 *mujahideen* had been killed and another 120 wounded. The worst news of all was that the *emir* had been killed, the target of a Predator missile that had successfully destroyed his Land Rover. While his followers celebrated his martyrdom, the *emir*'s death left a power vacuum among the *mujahideen*.

Around mid-morning, a group of gunmen arrived at the workshop to take us away. Zeynep pleaded with them in Turkish that we were to go free, but it was to no avail. "We received no such instruction," said the man who now appeared to be in charge. "You are spies."

This time, they were extremely rough in applying my blindfold. It was tied so tight that I could sense that I was losing blood circulation in my brain. They pushed and prodded me blindly toward a car and then deliberately bashed my head against the door frame. "Jewish pig!" spat one of the guards.

At the fourth house, which smelled like some sort of farm complex, I was once again rushed through doorways and then down into a cellar. In addition to the blindfold, they placed a hood over my head, and I felt I was suffocating in the heat and dust. I could feel the fear well up inside me as one of the gunmen forced me onto a mat and placed the barrel of a Kalashnikov against my neck. "Don't speak. Don't move."

Another group of men entered the cellar and began questioning Zeynep as to our identity. She told them of the *emir*'s promise and advised them that our papers were all at the first house. Finally, we were allowed to remove the hoods while the *mujahideen* went to check out our story. At this point, I realized that there was another prisoner in the room with us. He was an Iraqi from Mosul—also accused of spying. He was not allowed to remove his hood.

Throughout the rest of the morning, there was plenty of activity in the resistance bunker. About 30 or so fighters were busy transferring stockpiles of RPG's and explosives. In addition to the gruff male voices, we could hear an elderly woman shouting encouragement to the men. "They call her mother," whispered Zeynep. "She is encouraging her 'sons' to go out and become martyrs and die in battle. Can you believe it?"

Our previous interrogator returned to our makeshift cell to advise us that our bags, cameras, and identity papers were now buried under a heap of rubble: The first house had been destroyed by a precision-guided bomb. With no proof of our nationality or profession, a heated debate among the fighters soon erupted outside in the corridor.

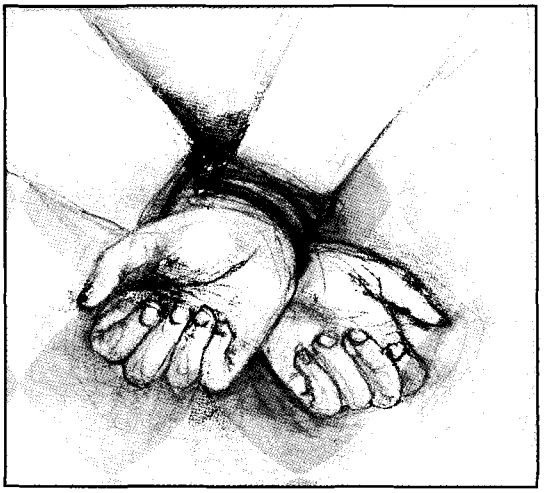
Listening to their conversation, Zeynep suddenly gasped: "O my God—they're going to shoot us!" I fought to suppress the panic that I felt. It was then that the other prisoner spoke for the first time. In good English, he said, "Are you sure?"

The door burst open, and several men stepped inside. "Stand up," one of them said to me. "You are the first to die, American pig." My hands were still tied, and I felt helpless as one of them approached me with another blindfold. I told them that I did not want a blindfold—not out of any bravado, but because I found that the sense of fear was magnified by the inability to see. I received a punch on the head for my protest, and the blindfold was pulled snugly into place. This time, they added a gag and a black hood.

Once again, I could feel the claustrophobia and fear beginning to panic me, and I struggled to maintain some composure. The cries of fear and alarm from Zeynep had caught the attention of the woman, who apparently had not realized that the men were detaining a female. She entered our cell, and a heated discussion took place between her and the fighters. Several times during their conversation, I was struck, and I still believed I was about to die. Finally, one of the *mujahideen* came close to me and whispered, "I have a brother in Canada. I have just saved you, my friend—at least for now."

They had decided to take us with them. The Americans were about to bomb their complex so they were going to leave Tal Afar until the air strikes were over. The hood and mask remained in place, and the man who said he had saved me warned me not to make any noise. "If my people hear someone speak English, they will beat you to death before I can stop them—now move!"

Although the Americans had claimed they had "sealed off" Tal Afar before launching their offensive, I soon learned that was nothing more than wishful thinking. We had left the bunker in a six-car convoy and made our way northward into the open desert. It had taken some time before the *mujahideen* had relented and allowed us to remove our hoods and blindfolds. Our hands were still tied, but I had sweat so much in the 45-degree (Celsius) heat that the moisture had loosened the straps. I was able to free my hands easily—and, in an effort to gain



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their trust, I had shown them that my bonds needed to be retied. The man next to me had simply laughed and instructed me to "forget about it." After all, where can you go in the desert?

As we began chatting, this short gray-haired man with a close-cropped beard informed me that his brother was the now-deceased *emir*. "I'm sorry about his death," I said, to which he replied, "Why be sorry? We celebrate his entry into heaven."

What was reassuring to me was that, as the brother of the former leader, this man appeared to have filled the immediate leadership void in the group. I was especially relieved to learn that his brother had told him of the decision to set us free. We were also told that we had only to have our identities confirmed—*via* a Google search on the internet—and he would keep the promise of the martyred *emir*. In the meantime, we would remain with the *mujahideen*.

Around 2 P.M., we had stopped near a remote desert house. The nearly 30 fighters had assembled around our car and began to conduct a mass prayer. Zeynep and I were instructed to remain in the car. It was as they were engrossed in their prayer that I spotted the two American helicopters coming out of the south—low and fast and headed straight toward our parked convoy. I cried out in alarm. The *mujahideen* were angry at the interruption, until they, too, spotted the approaching threat. Caught out in the open, they were sitting ducks. Nobody could move; they simply watched the helicopters steadily bear down on us.

At about 800 meters, the gunships inexplicably banked away to the east without so much as a reconnaissance overpass of our mysterious group of vehicles in the middle of the desert. "They always fly the same patrol routes," explained one of the fighters. "They see nothing."

Shortly after the helicopters had departed, two additional cars joined us, and the *mujahideen* began hastily transferring the huge stockpiles of explosives and rockets into them. "We are making them into suicide bombs," said Mubashir, the *emir*'s brother, of the cars being loaded and wired. "These men will head back into Tal Afar and use the vehicles to destroy the American armored vehicles." A total of four *mujahideen* climbed into the suicide cars, and, as they drove back into the battle, their comrades shouted a final encouragement.

We proceeded on through the desert toward the northern outskirts of Mosul. Along the way, we stopped at several farmhouses where the residents eagerly offered the fighters food and water. When we actually entered the Mosul checkpoint, the Iraqi police appeared to take no notice of the dusty column of cars packed with bearded men armed with Kalashnikovs and RPG's. A gauntlet of young boys lined the route to cheer our convoy and offer water and cigarettes. Instead of entering the city, however, we headed farther north to a deserted house that was still under construction. We were ordered inside the building, and I realized that the other hostage, a driver for UNICEF, had spent the entire three-hour desert transit in the trunk of one of the cars. He emerged from the vehicle, still blindfolded, covered in dust and sweat, and without his shoes. He was in terrible condition, but he made no sound of complaint as they hurried us into the empty house.

All but one of the cars soon departed, leaving only two armed guards with us, so the possibility of escape crossed my mind. It was the hottest part of the day, and the sentries were exhausted. Although it was open ground, the Mosul highway was clearly visible, about two kilometers away. With all the passing traffic, it would be possible to flag down a ride—if I could only survive the run.

Before I could give much thought to such a plan, another car pulled up at our hideout. Four new *mujahideen* strode into our building and immediately began berating the two guards for being lenient with us. The leader of this group was a short, stocky, little man who strutted about with his ski mask on. He wasted no time in making his thoughts known. "The Turkish girl will live. You two will die," he said, pointing at me and the UNICEF driver. "I will cut off your heads at dusk, and you will be buried there," pointing to a freshly dug grave-sized ditch about 20 meters from the house.

Zeynep was removed to another room and we were told to prepare ourselves to die. Although forbidden to talk whenever the guard was distracted, the driver and I took the opportunity to encourage each other. "At least we will not die alone," he said.

Canadian journalist Scott Taylor is the author, most recently, of Spinning on the Axis of Evil: America's War Against Iraq. *Part Two of this piece will appear in the February 2005 issue.*

Letter From Texas

by Wayne Allensworth

Everything Dies

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It was one of those winter days in Texas that seem as gray as the surface of the moon and about as hospitable. It's cool outside, so you wear a jacket. Inside, it's stuffy. I'm wearing a coat and running the fan at the same time. You can't quite get comfortable when it's like that. I park near a marker so I can find the car again in the vast parking area, which looks like one of those car lots you see near the interstates, as big as a county, if not a small principality.

I admit to a horror of hospitals. The antiseptic smells mixed with the distinct aromas of disease, decay, urine, and what I've heard called "institutional food" is probably enough to depress anybody, but maybe it's the memories I have of lingering death, of old people hanging on in spite of themselves, long after they can't recognize you anymore, that did it. And needles give me the creeps.

I wander the long halls until I find the room and slowly poke my head in, checking to see if Pawps is awake. He is. I ask him how he is, which seems stupid, since I know how he is; you have to ask, anyway. He arches his brows and says he's not bad, considering. He's in good spirits, though pale and thinner than in my memories of his robust middle age, golden-tinted skin, wavy hair in the breeze on Galveston Bay. They still have the boat.

It passes through my mind that Poppa used to call him "Happy."

Through a sheer curtain, I hear the labored breathing of another patient. Later, I wonder who the man was and what kind of story he had to tell.

Pawps tells me the doctor will call soon. He's impatient, uncomfortable. That's understandable, given the golf-ball-sized tumor in his lung ("They say I got that from in the war, welding in the shipyards," he tells me) and the fluid that has accumulated there. They'll draw off the fluid and insert some kind of powder to soak it up as it seeps back into his chest. "They can't really stop it, you know, just treat it. Maybe I'll get another year or two, the Good Lord willing." I just nod at him, telling him I hope He is. "Well," he says, "it has to end sometime." Then he

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adds, "I don't want to leave Evelyn, you know. This June will be seventy years." At that, she comes in, nearly 90 and as lively and good humored as ever, a woman who went deer hunting every year until the doc told her the recoil of the rifle was bad for an eye he was treating. I can't remember what was wrong with the eye. She was well into her 80's.

A little later, I'm crossing the parking lot, remembering when their dogs died. Pawps had said they didn't want another. Not now.

Everything dies. Did I frown or snarl when I looked out at the congested freeway, remembering the pall of a brownish cloud hanging over this city as I approached it yesterday? The town's so huge and unmanageable now, not unlike a cancerous growth. It's big, crawling with people, some of them still reasonably civilized, some still vaguely American, but dying just the same.

I don't like coming back here.

Two weeks later, I'm at Pawps' bedside again. He doesn't have long now, and he tells me he's ready to go. We sit and talk. He tells me he saw an angel at the foot of his bed a few nights earlier. He tells me about his possessions he wants me to have, which blends into a lament for what used to be. The world has become a strange, even terrifying, place for him. I wonder how lost he must feel in post-America, and think of my great-grandmother, who at first denounced the moon landings as blasphemy, then refused to believe they had really taken place. But I'm not sure I'm any less disoriented than the old people I know.

He's saying something I can't quite understand, so I draw nearer and ask him to repeat it.

"It's our sins," he says. That's what causes our suffering. I nod and stand stiffly by his side.

We brought him home the day before, according to his wishes, and in the room are pictures from decades past, friends, family, and all that has passed before but has never really left us. We recite the Apostle's Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the 23rd Psalm, and he fades off into sleep, looking spare but restful.

Earlier, I had been with my daughter Rachel at the Antique Center of Texas, where my folks have a booth. They're rearranging things, and I help when I can, otherwise staying out of the way. Rachel is dusting.

I wander around the booth, examining the collection. A prayer seat. You lift the seat up, and underneath there is a pad to kneel on and pray. The chair is marked in ornate cursive "*M Terral.*" Who was he? I imagine him as a prosperous Christian, perhaps in Britain or 19th-century America. Next to the prayer seat is an old-fashioned wooden pie chest from Chick Schreiber's grocery store. That store was still open in the 60's, a butcher's block and wooden floors in a real West End neighborhood. Chick has long been gone. So has the neighborhood. There's an old hand-cranked ice-cream freezer, now polished and gleaming, looking a little like the one we used to use, sweating and fighting the mosquitoes on our front porch, waiting in happy anticipation for the sweet, heavy, creamy stuff. In a corner stands a bookshelf. I leaf through musty volumes with ornate illustrations printed on thick paper, adventures by Robert Louis Stevenson, Howard Pyle, and Anthony Hope. *Treasure Island*, *Robin Hood*, and *The Prisoner of Zenda*. Books to savor, smelling the pages, feeling the texture of the binding, stories you never wanted to end. I examine the mantle clocks, each an example of expert craftsmanship. You still had to be able to tell time, too.

I wander out of the booth, mixing with the groups of people milling about, walking past similar collections, a vast graveyard for America and the broader civilization she once belonged to, the people half-consciously grasping for bits of a thicker, more real reality, not quite understanding what has happened, filling their homes with replicas and symbols of a lost world, sometimes sifting amid the rubble for a longed-for authenticity they can't quite define.

Tear it down, then collect the junk that's left.

I wander outside, a few stray raindrops pelting my cap and denim jacket.

Everything dies. Your dogs, your town, your blood kin, my country. So people isolate themselves, not wanting to step out and put too much into a neighborhood, a village, a city, a family, a craft, a book, or a friendship, because it all dies and won't come back; so live for yourself and don't suffer. That seems to be the unconscious theory, at any rate. But I know that's a deception, that even if this all does pass away forever—and it will—it will have been worth the trip. A friendship is worth the grief that comes with the passing of the friend, and love of place is worth the price of a patriot's suffering at its decline. There are no substitutes for

a real life lived fully, no replicas of home worth having, no fleeting encounter that can pass for love, no virtual reality.

Rachel is looking for me. She grins and says, "Look what Grandma gave me!" It's a tiny, ornate, silver fork and matching spoon. She asks me if I will keep them for her. I fold them up in a napkin, put them in my pocket, and tell Rachel with the big brown eyes, "You won't want to lose these, Honey. You'll never want to lose them."

Wayne Allensworth writes from Keller, Texas.

Letter From Paris

by Curtis Cate

Stakhanovism in Reverse

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Last April, Claude Imbert, editor in chief of the moderately conservative weekly *Le Point*, dared to make an astonishing *mea culpa*. In a minor masterpiece of melancholic irony, he confessed the awful truth that he was a "liberal"—which, in present-day French parlance, means someone who believes in free enterprise as a necessary antidote to socialistic regimentation. Alas, he admitted,

> in France liberals are not popular. Here a moderate liberal is called an ultraliberal and stinks of heresy. The Left, wearing its heart on its sleeve, consigns us to the camp of the heartless. Its intellectual phalanx denounces us as lackeys of the MEDEF [the French equiva-

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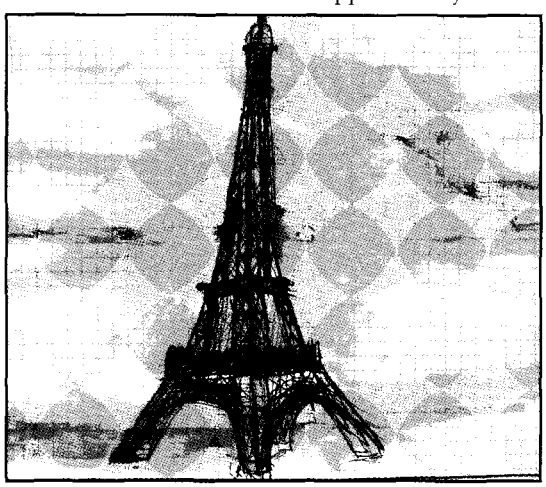
lent of Britain's Confederation of British Industry, or of our National Association of Manufacturing]. The communists—truly the last straw!—lecture us on the course of History, which we don't, like them, interpret correctly. As for the official Right, like us it creeps along the walls, it hides us as though we were wanton sons. It's enough to make one believe that in every Frenchman there is a Proudhon, a lurking maker of systems. One who, having retained nothing of the lessons of the past, still dreams of whittling away our creative freedoms. One who wants to coop us in, in order—with a more "social" hand—to share out revenues and, from now on, work itself.

The proof of it, Imbert concluded, was "*l'affaire des 35 heures*"—the now sacrosanct 35-hour workweek, which had become a "case history of the *mal français*"—of the social and economic anchylosis now afflicting France.

If national politics have become increasingly confused and confusing for bewildered French voters, it is in no small part because the traditional lines of cleavage have become blurred, and moderate conservatives no longer dare to be regarded as "right wingers" or to proclaim the "liberal" convictions they are supposed to believe in. It would be unfair to single out Jean-Pierre Raffarin (France's prudent, patient, Percheron-plodding prime minister) as a prototypical specimen of this reluctance to sport any kind of conservative colors. For the supreme example of this kind of political abdication is none other than President Jacques Chirac. During the press conference he held in the Elysée Palace on Bastille Day, he capitulated to his socialist opponents by casually remarking that the 35-hour workweek was an "*acquis social*"—a henceforth untouchable "social acquisition."



The event—more exactly, a "non-event"—that prompted Claude Imbert's ironic editorial was the quiet burial by Prime Minister Raffarin, acting on orders from President Chirac, of a detailed parliamentary report on "*La France des 35 heures*," which seems likely to remain the most exhaustive study yet made of the complex question of the 35-hour workweek, and what it has done to "fragilize" the French economy and to "split" French society. Established in early October 2003 by two enterprising National Assembly deputies, Patrick Ollier and Hervé Novelli, both members of Jacques Chirac's majority party, the 29-member "Mission" (which even included one Communist) spent six months interviewing 53 prominent captains of industry, labor leaders, university professors, sociologists, hospital directors, and public-health officials and made seven exploratory trips to various regions of "provincial" France. Among those cross-examined was, not least of all, Martine Aubry, the former Socialist minister of employment and solidarity who originated the controversial uproar five years ago by decreeing that, from the start of the 21st century on, the new work norm for all wage earners in France would be a working week of 35, instead of 39, hours.

It is impossible, I think, for anyone who is not a rabid socialist to read even the first 30 pages of *La France des 35 heures* without a feeling of mounting stupefaction. (The first volume alone runs to 334 pages; the second, including the fascinating verbatim texts of the 53 interviews, to 626 pages of small type.) For what they reveal is, first of all, the economic naiveté of the former minister of employment and solidarity, and, second, the incredible juggling of handouts and tax benefits which the state—*i.e.* the Ministry of Finance—has been forced to resort to in order to keep thousands of French enterprises from being bankrupted by the new draconian legislation limiting weekly hours of work.

First, a few basic facts. What came to be known as the first "*loi* Aubry" was passed by Lionel Jospin's Socialist majority in the National Assembly on June 13, 1998, and reinforced by a second on January 19, 2000. The first law decreed that, from January 1, 2000, the norm for all French enterprises employing more than 20 wage earners would be 35 hours per week and that, from January 2002 onward, this prescription would be applied to all smaller enterprises as well.

Up until 2000, the norm in France was a workweek of 39 hours. By reducing this statutory level by four hours, Martine Aubry and her Socialist friends reckoned that French enterprises would be forced to hire new workers to maintain their present levels of production—thus creating new jobs and reducing an embarrassingly high level of unemployment. Since wage earners, forced to work four hours less per week, were certain to yell their heads off in furious protest over the resultant loss of income, they were offered a painless bonanza: They would continue to be paid the same salary as before. This amounted, in effect, to a windfall pay raise of 11.4 percent.

In terms of political tactics, this was unquestionably a master stroke. Since there are close to 20 million wage earners in France, compared with some 1.6 million entrepreneurs, Lionel Jospin's Socialists were bound to win increased popularity with the working masses. The party was once again fulfilling its historic role—which is at least as old as Jean Jaurès (1859-1911) and the Emile Zola of *Germinal* (1885)—as the champion of the downtrodden and oppressed against the perennial abuses of their oppressors, the hated as well as heartless *patrons* (bosses).

This appeal to tradition is anything but accidental. As Jacques Marseille, an "anarcho-liberal" professor of economic history at the Sorbonne, has often pointed out in books and articles, France's Socialists today—and, in this, Martine Aubry is typical—are, in reality, reactionaries who have a hopelessly antiquated and "Dickensian" view of present-day conditions in French factories and business offices. (Among other things, the coal miners of *Germinal* no longer exist.)

Not unnaturally, the introduction of the statutory 35-hour workweek, remunerated on the previous salary basis of 39 hours, was welcomed by millions of French wage earners, and particularly by women who now found a bit more free time for shopping and other domestic chores. Not all wage earners, however, were satisfied—beginning with those who, to supplement their incomes, had been working overtime. A particularly pernicious feature of these new regulations were the restrictions introduced to discourage enterprises from resorting to overtime work, since—according to the

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simplistic economic logic of Martine Aubry and her friends—someone who works overtime is being favored at the expense of another worker who is presently unemployed. The level of increase for overtime payments was accordingly fixed at 25 percent of the basic wage for the first eight hours of overtime work, the rate being further raised to 50 percent for each additional hour thereafter. An overall limit of 130 hours *per annum* of overtime work was also imposed on all French enterprises, no matter how big or small. Since the Aubry laws guaranteed all wage earners five weeks annually of paid vacations, this meant that even the humblest *patron* could not legally ask one of his workers to put in more than three hours of overtime in any average week.

In an authoritative book devoted to the right to work, the eminent economist Jean-Emmanuel Ray wrote that the inevitable result of these overtime restrictions was to introduce a regime of "calamitous" complexity "into such a daily matter." This was an understatement. As my butcher, who has to get up at three o'clock in the morning three days per week to buy his meat cuts at the wholesale market of Rungis, southeast of Paris, recently said to me: "I now have to spend four hours a week filling out papers for the *inspecteurs du travail*," who periodically descend on him to make sure that he is not "breaking the law"—in which case, he is fined. "If I limited myself and my assistants to a 35-hour week, we would all go bankrupt in three days."

It should have been obvious to Martine Aubry and her Socialist friends that French entrepreneurs, already hamstrung by irksome restrictions concerning a *patron*'s right to fire an unsatisfactory worker, would not take this new crippling legislation lying down. Since the state was again declaring war on their freedom of action and was determined to discourage overtime work, many of them agreed to cooperate with the watchdogs of the Inspection du Travail, but in their own way—not by hiring new workers but by asking their employees to work more efficiently in the name of increased "productivity."

The new 35-hour workweek thus aggravated an already existing entrepreneurial penchant for "non-employment." As a recently retired French businessman in the field of sophisticated electronics explained to me one day,

> In the United States, an entrepreneur can hire or fire an employee with a minimum of red tape. This freedom acts as a powerful incentive to employ human beings. In France, however, the hiring or firing of even a single employee is an incredibly complex, bureaucratic process. Consequently, whenever we wanted to increase our output of manufactured products, we would spend our time at managerial meetings trying to find ways of *not* hiring new employees, and instead of investing in even more up-to-date and efficient machinery. The paradoxical result, since thousands of other entrepreneurs were doing the same thing, is that—believe it or not—the average French worker today has a level of productivity that is as high, if not higher, as that of a worker in America.

Curiously enough, the new 35-hour workweek, with its crippling system of overtime restrictions—a kind of reverse Stakhanovism ("What we need is not more output, but more employment!")—was soon being criticized by left-wingers who might have been expected to support it. Speaking with his customary nonconformist frankness, the Socialist deputy Pierre Emmanuelli declared (to the left-wing newspaper *Le Monde*): "The guy who has lost 100 euros a month in overtime hours couldn't care less if the Socialists have created 300,000 jobs."

This low figure was only a slight underestimation. The three major opinion-poll research institutes that have rigorously examined the consequences of the 35-hour workweek agree that the number of jobs actually created by Martine Aubry's laws is no more than 350,000, which, in four years of strenuous propaganda and persuasion, is not exactly a national achievement to boast about in a country that continues to suffer an unemployment level of between 8 and 9 percent (as opposed, for example, to around 5.5 percent in Great Britain).

The most pernicious result of the official sanctification of the 35-hour workweek is of a collective-psychological, rather than of a strictly bureaucratic-administrative, order. It offers, as a fashionable new ethos, encouragement to an increasingly popular search for facility among young French postadolescents who are looking for a job. Any form of work involving strenuous effort is now instinctively avoided, and the first question a young French job-seeker is likely to ask is, "And how many weeks of paid vacation does this job guarantee me?"

A young French girl I know who decided to fulfill her one day of "civic duty" for her country was dumbfounded to find herself being encouraged by officials to join one of France's three armed services, with the specific guarantee that, during her years of duty, the sacrosanct 35-hour workweek would be respected! In early September, a restaurant owner in northern France had to broadcast his desperate appeal for kitchen aides and waiters on a major TV channel after having spent 15,000 euros in advertising without receiving a single reply! Where manual labor comes to be regarded as a form of personal indignity, that country, clearly, is in very serious trouble.

No one is more acutely aware of these national shortcomings than France's most dynamic and, for the moment, popular politician, Nicolas Sarkozy, who, last March, was shifted from the Ministry of the Interior to the even more important Ministry of Economy and Finance. Fearless as ever in his readiness to disagree with his "superiors"—above all, President Jacques Chirac—he lost little time airing his lack of enthusiasm for the 35-hour workweek, declaring, quite simply, that "nothing could be more natural than to want to work more in order to earn more money."

He followed up by asking Michel Camdessus, the former director general of the International Monetary Fund, to write a report for him on the existing hindrances to French economic growth. The result was a withering indictment of the 35-hour workweek and its easygoing concomitants—five weeks of paid vacations and early retirement at the age of 55. A defensively inspired Maginot Line mentality in the field of economics, or what he called a "losing strategy," had done nothing to reduce the country's high level of unemployment. With three simple statistics, he summed up France's present, as well as the future crisis it is going to face in the difficult years ahead: "If a French wage-earner produces 5% more in an hour of work than an American, he will produce 13% less in a single year, and 36% less during his active lifetime."

Curtis Cate, who has lived in France for more than 40 years, is the author of four biographies, the latest devoted to Friedrich Nietzsche.

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by Srdja Trifkovic

European Bushophobia

The announcement of President George W. Bush's victory last November 3 was immediately followed by an outpouring of vitriol by a legion of European editorialists and op-ed columnists. The Michael Moore wannabes ranted and raved while the "analysts" whined and wailed. The tone of the former was set by a Fleet Street tabloid, the *Daily Mirror*. "You have to feel sorry for the millions of Yanks in the big cities," opined its editorialist, for the "sophisticated side of the electorate" who voted to kick Bush out:

> As for the ones who put him in, across the Bible Belt and the South, us outsiders can only feel pity. Were I a Kerry voter, though, I'd feel deep anger, not only at them returning Bush to power, but for allowing the outside world to lump us all into the same category of moronic muppets. The self-righteous, gun-totin', military lovin', sister marryin', abortion-hatin', gay-loathin', foreigner-despisin', non-passport ownin' red-necks, who believe God gave America the biggest d--k in the world so it could urinate on the rest of us and make their land "free and strong" . . . Yanks had the chance to show the world a better way this week, instead they made a thuggish cowboy ride off into the sunset bathed in glory.

The broadsheets were saying exactly the same thing, only in somewhat less offensive language. A Californian expat told *Der Spiegel* that she is staying in Germany because, "in my adopted new land, gay marriage is legal, the Green Party is a major power player and debates swirl about less, not more, religion in schools." Henry Porter wrote in the *Guardian* that "Americans are seen as unsophisticated, willfully ignorant, obsessed with such issues as abortion, guns and gay marriage" but then graciously conceded the possibility that they are "far more complicated" than "we" understand them to be:

> Perhaps this is a rather condescending view of the US electorate . . . This is why we should not lump all Americans together in the category of Neanderthal Republican thuggery, which will certainly be a temptation . . . [W]e should remember that there are millions of decent, thoughtful people in the US. It often takes a while for the penny to drop with these guys, but sooner or later it always does.

The following day, the *Guardian* had a page of solid black containing just two small words: "Oh, God." Its leftist rival, the *Independent*, had the headline "Four More Years" interspersed with the pictures of kneeling prisoners at Guantanamo, tortured inmates at Abu Ghraib, soldiers fighting in Iraq, oil-drilling equipment, antiabortion demonstrators, and a smirking George W. Bush.

The scribes usually not identified with the left jumped on the bandwagon, with a sigh of patronizing exasperation. "Mr. Bush's election will give the rest of the world a collective heart attack," wrote Simon Jenkins in the *Times* of London:

> It expected a Kerry win. At the very least it expected Americans to somehow rein in a man it sees as naïve and dangerously belligerent . . . Americans declined to rein him in. They legitimised him. The rest of the world has been roundly snubbed.

The "snub" was felt painfully in Paris, with the *Liberation* warning that "this new America of the 21st century is a reactionary America. Spurred by fear, this new America can become extremist and aggressive." The following day, it asserted that "no other nation shares America's political and religious idiosyncrasy." This view was shared by the leading Catholic daily, *La Croix*:

> Bush is here to stay. But this reality will not keep the world from contesting his vision of the world, of history and of the religious role he has adopted. We will say and repeat during the next four years that Christianity does not have its prophet in the White House.

Eva Busse, writing in the *Financial Times Deutschland*, found that "paralyzing fear" is gripping the world's most powerful country:

> Bush's reelection can only be explained by the definite, but often irrational security need the majority of Americans are longing for. Looking at it from the European point of view, this emotional decision appears to be incomprehensible.

Le Monde saw America as "bizarre"—New York and California excepted—while, in Munich, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* described the situation as "strange," and explicitly placed Europe on the same side as the Arab world against the United States:

> [T]he international world . . . is infected with the Bush bacillus, which divides and demands. That is why there is the real danger that polarization will continue in the rest of the world and is even intensified. For many nations, mainly in Europe and the Arab world, reconciliation with the United States seems to be unthinkable.

On it went, one humorless pair of John Lennon specs after another, one angry-looking dykey scribette after another. It was pathetic: to think that *these* people dictate the tone of public debate in Europe—presumably the best educated, the most sophisticated part of the world. What else can we expect, however, from the milieu in which a Bernard Henri-Levy passes for a serious thinker, a Guenther Grass for a great writer, and a Tony Blair for a statesman?

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The intensive hatred of the "Bush bacillus" has nothing to do with the President's willingness to launch military interventions *per se*: His most passionate Euro-haters were, for the most part, vocal supporters of Bill Clinton's pro-Muslim Balkan interventions a decade ago. It has nothing to do with Bush's "unilateralism": They did not hold against Kerry his vote to authorize Clinton's equally non-U.N.-approved war against the Serbs in March 1999. It has nothing to do with the WMD lies, since the *Mirror*, the *Guardian*, the *Independent*, *et al.* are enthusiastic liars for *their* kind of truth, fervent purveyors of the "Bosnian rape camps," the "Kosovo genocide," and similar whoppers in the 1990's.

In reality, the hatred of George W. Bush is based primarily on the European *bien-pensant* class's visceral Christophobia and its hostility even to the most benign understanding of national or ethnic coherence. They do not know, or do not care, that there is less than meets the eye in Mr. Bush's conservative credentials and that their caricature of "America" is not only ugly and offensive but simply untrue. They need distortions as a tool of domestic policy and as a means of personal gratification. In these "sensitive," "diverse" times, when nothing unkind can be said of Islam or Rastafarianism, they revel in their ability to insult with impunity a white, Christian minority group that resists postmodernity. Today, they do it with the "gun-totin', military lovin', sister marryin', abortion-hatin', gay-loathin', foreigner-despisin', non-passport ownin' red-necks," just as they have done it with the genocidal Serb ethnic cleansers in the 90's and the apartheid-enforcing Afrikaner thugs before that.

It is ironic but unsurprising that, in their hatefest, the European elite class displays almost complete similarity to the one group of Bush's advisors they profess to loath: the neoconservatives. Both Euro-Bushophobes and neocons are former Marxists who have morphed into new, ostensibly diverse, but closely related life forms. Both pursue an ideology of socialism at home and internationalist imperialism abroad and share a distaste for Western tradition by promoting alien *Weltanschauungen* into a parity of esteem. Both are hell-bent on destroying the real communities in their own countries, on eradicating the remnants of those nations' tradition and culture in the name of similar universalist notions.

Most European Bushophobes are *dirigiste* statists. The Leviathan in Brussels embodies their managerial preferences. In this, they ostensibly differ from the neoconservatives (who glorify the free market), but the latter's rhetoric is deceptive. In reality, the neocons favor not free enterprise but a kind of state capitalism—within the context of the global apparatus of the World Bank and the IMF—to which the bureaucrats who run the European Union can easily relate. Both are statists *par excellence*, and, in their shared core belief that society can be managed by the state in both its political and economic life, both are equally at odds with the traditional conservative outlook.

The Bushophobes are explicitly post- and anti-nationalist, but the neocons are not "patriotic" either, certainly not in any conventional sense of the term. They do not identify themselves with the real and historic America but see the United States merely as the host organism for the exercise of their will to power. Whereas the American political tradition has been fixated on the dangers of centralized state power, on the desirability of limited government and nonintervention in foreign affairs, the neoconservatives exalt and worship state power and want the United States to become a hyperstate—just as their European counterparts want the European Union to become a hyperstate—in order to be an effective tool of social and cultural engineering.

The neoconservatives view America as a hybrid nation based on Platonic notions of "American principles." A decade ago, William Kristol and Robert Kagan thus gloated about what they called "benevolent global hegemony." Their vision of *pax Americana* was encapsulated in their exultation that

> we have never lived in a world more conducive to [our] fundamental interests in a liberal international order, the spread of freedom and democratic governance, [and] an international economic system of free-market capitalism and free trade.

This has its exact counterpart in the claim of the E.U. constitution that Europe's inhabitants, "arriving in successive waves since the first ages of mankind, have gradually developed the values underlying humanism: equality of persons, freedom, respect for reason,"

> drawing inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, the values of which, still present in its heritage, have embedded within the life of society its perception of the central role of the human person and his inviolable and inalienable rights, and of respect for law, believing that reunited Europe intends to continue along this path of civilization, progress and prosperity, for the good of all its inhabitants, including the weakest and most deprived; that it wishes to remain a continent open to culture, learning, and social progress; and that it wishes to deepen the democratic and transparent nature of its public life, and to strive for peace, justice and solidarity throughout the world.

These two types of megalomania have common roots and common fruits, and both are driven by the common psychotic quest for power and dominance. They operate by the Straussian dictum that perpetual deception of the citizens by those in power is necessary because they need to be led, and they need to be told what is good for them. Open borders and Third World immigration are the litmus test: To neocons and Bushophobes alike, they destroy the remnants of the old order and promote the counterempire that will be made possible by demographic change within the West. In both cases, we encounter merely a modified paradigm of dialectical materialism geared to pursuing the same eschatological dream: the End of History, devoid of God.

Some differences do exist. The Bushophobes advocate "multilateralism," in the form of an emerging "international community" controlled by the United Nations or through a gradual transfer of sovereign prerogatives to regional groupings exemplified by the European Union, while the neoconservatives' model bears more resemblance to the New European Order of six decades ago.

A more significant difference is that the neoconservative mind-set is apocalyptic, after the manner of national socialism, whereas that of postmodern Europe is utopian, in the spirit of the Trotskyite left. The neocons' replacement of the Soviet threat with the more amorphous "terrorism" reflects the doomsday revolutionary mentality that can never rest. The Europeans' response, that the threat is exaggerated or even nonexistent, reflects a kinder, gentler form of self-hatred. Both seek death, however, and both hate life, and Truth, and Goodness.

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IMMIGRATION

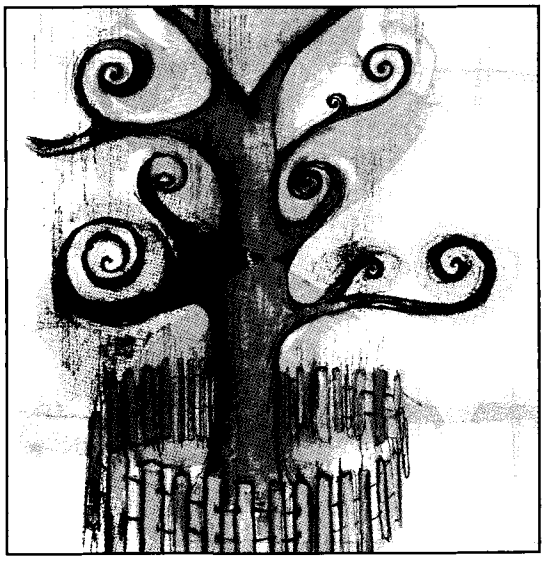
Life, Immigration, and the Pursuit of Consistent Conservatism

by James R. Edwards, Jr.

Congressman Chris Cannon of Utah and his open-borders cronies at the *Wall Street Journal*, who have embarked on a smear campaign against mainstream immigration-control groups, should learn to differentiate between real xenophobes (as found in an August 2004 Tennessee primary election) and the vast majority of people with legitimate rationales for favoring lower, tighter immigration.

The vast majority of Cannon's House Republican colleagues are both strongly pro-life and favor immigration control. However, an outright racist named James Hart won the GOP primary in Tennessee's 8th congressional district. He bases his immigration views on eugenics, a discredited pseudoscience of racial superiority. State Republicans have distanced the party from Hart.

Earlier this year, Cannon faced opposition in the GOP primary from pro-life immigration reformer Matt Throckmorton, a former state legislator, because of Cannon's stance on mass immigration. (Americans for Better Immigration has given Cannon a grade of D.) Throckmorton hammered Cannon's pro-amnesty stance and, remarkably, forced Cannon into a June 22 primary by robbing him of renomination at the Utah Republican state convention. Cannon—heavily outspending his opponent—won the primary election 58 to 42 percent.



Attempting to change the subject, Cannon issued a March 24 press release composed of snippets purporting to link some immigration-reform groups to the pro-abortion agenda. The *Journal* repeated the calumnies on its editorial page.

Cannon attacked two groups at a spring hearing of the House Immigration Subcommittee. The heads of the Center for Immigration Studies and NumbersUSA, who were testifying before the subcommittee, stated flat-out that their groups do not take positions on life issues and instead focus solely on immigration. Neither organization advocates coercive population-control policies, sterilization, abortion, eugenics, or euthanasia, as Cannon tried repeatedly to imply.

Without solid facts to back their assertions, Cannon's and the *Journal*'s detour through the mud has failed to silence critics of their open-borders policies. This does, however, provide an opportunity to consider why so many people are both pro-life and pro-immigration control.

While Cannon and a handful of immigration extremists such as Reps. Jeff Flake (ABI grade: D+) and Jim Kolbe (ABI grade: C) and Sens. Chuck Hagel (ABI grade: D-) and Sam Brownback (ABI grade: D) represent the Republican fringe, most of his GOP colleagues are like "consistent conservative" Reps. John Hostettler (ABI grade: A) and Todd Akin (ABI grade: A-) and Sens. Saxby Chambliss (ABI grade: A-) and James Inhofe (ABI grade: B). Of all the politicians mentioned, only Kolbe is pro-abortion, according to the National Right to Life Committee scorecard.

House Republicans, by and large, who are evangelical Christians, reject the "culture of death" mentality, and belong to caucuses such as the Values Action Team, vote overwhelmingly for immigration reform.

Representative Hostettler, the chairman of the House Immigration Subcommittee and an ardent Christian, explains the consistency between limited immigration and pro-life views. "It has to do with the value that is accorded to human life in America," he says. "People aren't coming to America just to get a job. People come to America because at some level they see that our culture values individual human life."

Hostettler, who was named the 2004 Christian Statesman of the Year, believes that assimilation is vital to America's future. Immigration must not outrun the capacity for assimilation. Those people who come from cultures where human life is not valued, where governments cannot or do not control violence or protect innocent people, may not naturally hold to traditional American standards. Congressional conservatives say America's future rests in part on immigrants embracing fundamental concepts such as respect for law, valuing individual human life, and ordered liberty.

This concern reflects a view widely held among the Founding Fathers. George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and others shared Thomas Jefferson's fear that immigrants

> will bring with them the principles of the governments they leave, imbibed in their early youth; or, if able to throw them off, it will be in exchange for an unbounded licentiousness, passing, as is usual, from one extreme to another.

"The notion of limited immigration is related to the notion of assimilation," Representative Hostettler says. "We want immigrants to adopt the value we place as a culture on innocent human life. Limited immigration promotes assimilation, the valuing of innocent human life."

Currently, the United States admits more than one million legal immigrants each year. Illegal aliens add another half-million annually. These are unprecedented levels of sustained immigration, compared with the traditional average of about 200,000 immigrants per year.

Immigration control involves our republic's admission or exclusion of those people whom the citizens of this society determine to admit or exclude. Since colonial times, American Christians have believed themselves to be fully within

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their rights to exclude or deport beggars, public charges, prostitutes, disease carriers, anarchists, and the like.

For many legislators, illegal immigration presents a clear case with moral implications. "Where morality comes in is we have laws on the books, and I don't want to reward those who break the law," says Sen. James Inhofe.

> Liberals believe punishment isn't necessary for criminals. But people who break the law are by definition immoral people. Obeying the law is a moral thing, and you can find Scriptures to back that up.

Senator Inhofe believes that granting illegal aliens amnesty rewards their lawlessness: "To allow amnesty on any basis is a slap in the face to those who've done it the right way."

Reducing the current exorbitant flow of immigrants into this particular nation to more manageable numbers is a reasonable, humane policy. The large segment of Americans with low skills and education face the greatest economic harm from mass immigration through direct job competition. Harvard economist George Borjas has found that the mere presence of huge numbers of foreign-born workers—"legal or illegal, permanent or temporary"—lowers the wages of the most vulnerable Americans. Borjas has determined that immigrant workers cost American citizens $1,700 each in average annual wage earnings between 1980 and 2000. Immigrants in the U.S. workforce drove down the pay of the poorest tenth of U.S. workers—"natives without a high school education"—by 7.4 percent, and that group suffered the toughest job competition. Mass immigration's economic harm hits most heavily on native-born blacks and Hispanics.

It is difficult to face these facts and still argue that unfettered immigration does not create losers as well as winners or that placing limits on the flood of immigrants somehow shows a lack of compassion since it means attending first to the welfare of our countrymen.

Could most congressional Republicans articulate this view? "It's intuitive, reflexive, a subconsciously held view," says Representative Hostettler. He echoes Senator Inhofe's belief in the rule of law. "There's also the principle of a nation of laws, the rule of law that's so important in our country. That also comes into play in people's thinking and voting."

Licentious extremes, such as forcing oneself on a society through immigration or aborting the unborn, undermine an ordered society. The fairest way to govern is for citizens to determine the future of their own nation.

James R. Edwards, Jr., coauthor of The Congressional Politics of Immigration Reform, *is an adjunct fellow of the Hudson Institute.*

PSYCHOLOGY

The Death of David Reimer: A Case Study in Psychiatric Politics

by B.K. Eakman

David Reimer, the 38-year-old man who was raised as a girl ("Brenda") following a botched circumcision in infancy, committed suicide on May 4, 2004.

As the left rushes to validate sodomy by judicial fiat and "homosexual marriage," perhaps now is an appropriate time to revisit his case. It reveals more about the public-policy effect of psychiatry and psychology on individual citizens than it does about the purported roots of sexual orientation.

Just who gave renowned sex researcher/psychologist Dr. John Money (even Freud might have appreciated the irony of the man's name) the right to change a two-year-old boy into a girl? Why did David undergo castration, female reconstructive surgery, and years of dangerous hormone therapy and psychotherapy in order to become "Brenda"?

David Reimer's parents approved the "sex change," based on the prevailing psychiatric theory that sexual identity is imposed by parents and society rather than determined by biology. Mr. Money, who was not a medical doctor, obtained some four million dollars in federal research grants from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). He later alluded to the case in several of his writings, including a 1975 book, *Sexual Signatures*, alleging that his experimental subject, David Reimer, was "sailing contentedly through childhood as a genuine girl," according to a *New York Times* review of his book.

But Milton Diamond, a psychologist at the University of Hawaii who helped expose the truth about what exactly had been done to the Reimer boy, took quite a different view of the difficulties David/"Brenda" encountered. It turned out that, once he became an adult, David Reimer sought to reject his female "sex change" and reinstate his masculine identity. That accomplished, insofar as was possible under the circumstances, he married a woman.

John Colapinto, a *Rolling Stone* journalist, penned the whole story, *As Nature Made Him: The Boy Who Was Raised as a Girl*, in 2000. He concluded that both politics and legislation were reshaped by John Money's view concerning the roots of what we call "sex roles."

The theories advanced by Money helped institutionalize the feminist notion that sex roles are "artificial constructs." This same hypothesis drives the homosexual movement today and provides the legislative momentum for same-sex "marriage."

The Reimer story highlights a pattern of unethical human experimentation and coercion that has become characteristic of the larger field known as "behavioral science"—an umbrella term that covers psychology, psychiatry, and the social "sciences." The aims of psychiatric research have often been more about politics and money than about true scientific inquiry.

Take, for example, the 1996 exposé by award-winning Canadian investigative journalist Christine Hahn. She uncovered an international scam to kidnap unsuspecting people for transport to experimental psychiatric facilities. In a series of stories, Hahn detailed how patients in Ontario were transported to the Tangram psychiatric "rehab" facility in Texas. The "patient pipeline" involved over one billion dollars and some 350 individuals, many of them children. Parents received exaggerated accounts of their youngsters' conditions to milk their insurance policies and to justify administering "progressive [read: experimental] psychiatric techniques."

Such skullduggery is even performed under the banner of such respected agencies as the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). In 1997, NIMH funded experiments on children as young as six in the New York State Psychiatric Hospital. As a result of a *New York Post* investigation, Dr. Stephen Hyman con-

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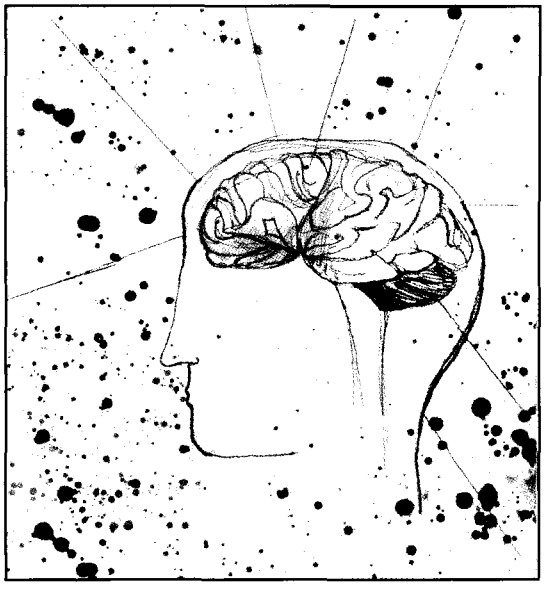
fessed to administering psychiatric drugs to induce psychiatric symptoms—suicidal thoughts, wild manic episodes, and violent behavior—while withholding vital information about these side effects from parents.

Then there is the practice of paying "bounty hunters" to steer vulnerable individuals to profit-seeking psychiatric institutions, where they are bilked and made guinea pigs. The *St. Petersburg Times* published an investigative report on Horizon Hospital in Clearwater, Florida, and the Swistock family in Warren, Ohio.

The Swistocks had been referred to Horizon in 1992 by a former probation officer, ostensibly to get them marriage counseling and some much-needed rest and relaxation. The couple arrived with their children. All were separated immediately, and their baggage was confiscated—makeup, razors, even toenail clippers. The entire family was fraudulently diagnosed with depression and prescribed psychiatric drugs. Although the children scored a flat zero on a depression inventory, they, too, were sedated, then pumped with dangerous steroids. After the nightmarish experience, the Swistocks got a divorce.

In a similar newspaper account, a Harbor Springs, Michigan, grandmother who wanted to lose weight was lured to a "health spa" in Orlando, Florida, and subjected to antidepression therapy. Far from being depressed, the woman was looking forward to a vacation, a "makeover," and a new wardrobe. Instead, she was placed in a violent environment with drug addicts until her bill reached $8,000.

Victims such as Mr. Reimer, the Tan-



gram children, the youngsters at New York State Psychiatric Hospital, the Swistocks, and the Michigan grandmother are, in effect, sacrificial lambs placed on the altar of psychological research. The theories-become-facts that inevitably ensue have translated to social chaos, cultural decay, obscene profits, and suicide.

Another side effect has been massive incursions by the mental-health industry into our schools, courts, churches, and legislative bodies. In schools, for example, psychological testing is considered a legitimate activity for educators and other staff. Attention-deficit disorder (ADD) and hyperactivity have become *the* fashionable epidemics, condemning millions of youngsters to a drugged existence while drug manufacturers reap astronomical profits for substances that have no effect other than to deaden the will—*i.e.*, tranquilize the subject into compliance or apathy.

Adults diagnosed with the "disorder" *du jour*—depression, oniomania (for "shopaholics"), and whatever else might be trendy, politically expedient, or just plain lucrative—may even manage to avoid jail time for their misdeeds, if they agree to undergo psychiatric counseling and, often, to take mind-altering drugs.

Only a few professional mavericks have dared to defy the prevailing wisdom. The list of psychiatric "diseases," defined by a voting consensus of the American Psychological Association without regard to any scientific criteria, is long. New entries go into a compendium known as the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, the bible of the psychiatric profession, which grew exponentially between 1952 and 1994. Today, the inventory comes to some 400 ailments—most not verifiable through any hard medical evidence such as X-rays or blood tests.

Beginning in the 1990's, the suspected cause of nearly every emotional distress became "a chemical imbalance" in the brain. The media has acted as if this term were fact, placing it firmly into the lexicon. There is just one problem: The phrase implies the existence somewhere of criteria that describe a "normal" chemical balance.

Nowhere, however, is found a standard for the optimum chemistry of a healthy brain. How much serotonin, for example, is too much? How much dopamine is not enough? One can find chemicals and proteins and so on listed as *present* in every human brain, but there is nothing like a range of correct *amounts* or *proportions* for each one.

Unethical experimentation by psychiatrists and psychiatric facilities is legendary, both here and abroad, beginning with high-stress wartime research on soldiers. North Korean military psychologists, for example, experimented with subliminal means of "breaking" their captives, without the use of physical torture. They learned they could create a psychological environment of hopelessness in which prisoners would just stop eating and then die.

The "free world" was not far behind. During World War II, a form of brainwashing, later dubbed the "science of coercion," was field-tested on British and American soldiers, ostensibly to prepare them for interrogation should they ever become prisoners of war. Dr. John Rawlings Rees at Britain's Tavistock Institute and Clinic boasted that healthy individuals could be induced, voluntarily, to "love what they once hated and abhor what they once cherished." He said he could turn a normal adult population "into the equivalent of neurotic little children."

Today, the Marxist left dominates the social/behavioral sciences, aided and abetted by such icons of political correctness as the American Civil Liberties Union (which never misses an opportunity to twist constitutional principles and upend standards of decency). Both the public at large and some legislators, however, are showing signs of becoming fed up with the excesses created in the name of mental "health."

Psychologists' war against dogmatism, inflexibility, intolerance, and judgmentalism is wreaking havoc on our society, producing a nightly cavalcade of criminals, degenerates, and perverts who parade across our televisions sets, having committed all manner of bizarre and horrendous acts unheard of only 40 years ago. Not surprisingly, many viewers are beginning to ask how society could have deteriorated to such an extent in a single generation.

In 1947, psychologist Brock Chisholm, Canadian psychiatrist and co-founder of the World Mental Health Federation, told an audience of his colleagues that traditional parents were creating a "thousand neurotics for every one that psychiatrists can hope to cure with psychotherapy." He called the Christian concepts of right and wrong "a perversion" that led to guilt, neurosis, and worse.

Chisholm's colleague, Dr. Ewen Cameron, declared the same year that "what

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we call morals are simply the customs, prohibitions and rules which a society maintains at any given time." A transcript from the Canadian Broadcasting Company has Cameron telling his listeners that "schools are passing on outworn, harmful and perilously misleading information about human beings" and that "the most important [new] tools are the fact-finding social sciences—psychology, sociology and psychiatry."

In a speech around the same time to the National Council for Mental Hygiene, Dr. Rees, the British psychologist who boasted of being able to turn normal adults into the equivalent of neurotic children, said that psychology must "permeate every educational activity of our national life." He told his audience that they should "imitate the Totalitarians and organize some kind of fifth column."

This was the 1940's, when the United States and Canada were still passing on mostly traditional values to their young. While "progressive" institutions, such as Columbia University, had been dabbling in counterculture ideology since the 1920's, these outlandish views were by no means pervasive in 1947.

By the 1970's, however, traditionalists of all stripes had become endangered species. Permanent labels started being attached to children, with an increasing emphasis on matching politically incorrect viewpoints with classifications for mental illness.

And human experimentation continued—in the name of "science," of course—thanks to large grants from private foundations and government, such as those John Money received through the NIH.

Much social engineering, including human medical experiments, has been intertwined with leftist politics, like the feminist hypothesis that sexual identity is malleable and determined by culture, not biology, or the notion that violent criminals can be rehabilitated and returned to society. These ideas, wrapped in the veneer of "science," have plunged our nation into an anarchist's dream. Once the basic units of civilization, such as the two-parent family and marriage, are destroyed, a nation is ripe for any sort of charismatic entity that promises to restore order—if the population in question is willing to give up some of its civil liberties.

Sexually transmitted diseases are soaring, the sexualizing of prepubescent youngsters (and, predictably, the sexual abuse of children) is increasing, and illegitimacy (along with the crime committed by the youth so conceived) is taking a huge toll on America's wealth, education, and social services.

Hypocrisy is rampant. Incredibly, the Boy Scouts are under fire for not permitting homosexual troop leaders at the same time that sex-abuse scandals, mostly involving young boys and homosexual priests, are rocking clergies. In March 2004, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected the Scouts' appeal, letting stand a Second Circuit Court of Appeals decision that held it is constitutionally permissible to exclude the organization from a state charitable program because the Scouts exclude avowed homosexuals from leadership positions.

Somehow, it was gauche to consider that multiple partners—and sexual recruitment—are the norm for homosexuals, not the exception. So now, we have "homosexual marriage" and even adoption—ideas so bizarre they would be laughable, were state legislators not acquiescing. For thousands of years, all cultures have recognized homosexuality as physically and emotionally destructive.

The David/"Brenda" Reimer debacle had ramifications that only-too-fleetingly captured public attention. In the past five years, articles by various experts have reported findings that inherent masculin-

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ity and inborn femininity are indeed realities, not "artificial constructs." They came too late for David Reimer.

B.K. Eakman, a teacher turned speechwriter and columnist, is executive director of the National Education Consortium and author of Cloning of the American Mind.

THEATER

Exeunt Metrosexuals

by James Moses

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Directed by Peter Dobbins
Written by William Shakespeare
Stage Manager: Joe Danbusky
Produced by the Storm Theatre

Trust

Directed by Erica Schmidt
Written by Gary Mitchell
Stage Manager: Megan Smith
Produced by The Play Company at the Kirk Theatre

When a former professional football player turns actor, the inclination is to set the bar rather low. Think O.J. Simpson as the security guard in *The Towering Inferno*. For that matter, think Dr. Johnson on female preachers.

I couldn't help myself, however, so I purchased a ticket to a production at the Storm Theatre in Times Square to see the once-explosive, virtually untackleable Hall-of-Fame fullback John Riggins utterly flop on his face in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* playing, of all things, Nick Bottom.

Funny. This offbeat guy, who sported a Mohawk haircut in the 1970's as a New York Jet and was the bane of NFL defensive lines in the early 1980's as he led the Washington Redskins to two Super Bowls, didn't flop—on face or bottom. He was superb.

Start with the first rehearsal, or, rather, discussion about rehearsal of that marvelously silly play-within-the-play, *The Most Lamentable Comedy and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisby*. Riggins' character wishes to do all the parts in the play by the "rude mechanicals" (in Elizabethan terminology, such "rude" occupations as carpenter, weaver, bellows mender, joiner, tinker, and tailor), but his is an endearing egotism that seeks to lead his fellow would-be thespians gently to their great moment at the Athenian court of Theseus.

In the middle of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Titiania, Queen of the Fairies, awakens under the influence of a magic spell to find herself irresistibly attracted to the rather grotesque Bottom, who has himself been supernaturally transformed into an ass. And his, ahem, ass is broad enough to fill the stage and rivet the attention.

His reaction to Titiania's passionate expression of love is skeptical, to say the least: "Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that. And yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together nowadays" (Act 3, Scene 1). Bottom here iterates that constant Shakespearean truth: the incompatibility of heart and head.

Throughout the comedy, the supernatural or metaphysical is associated with *eros*, because, for Shakespeare (and certainly, other great dramatists), amorous desire is irrational, remaining oblivious to parental disapproval, legal sanction, and even cruel rejection by the beloved, and desire always wins out.

Of course, love potions altering the real-life affections of the main characters makes for some almost slapstick comedic moments. The Hermia-Helena duel would, in any staging of the play, be one such confrontation, but, on this night, there was tittering from all in the audience when budding actress and tall, stately, beautiful Miss America 1998 (yes, it was celeb night at the Storm) Kate Shindle, playing Helena, declared in Act 2, Scene 2, "I am as ugly as a bear / For beasts that meet me run away for fear."

Miss Shindle was good, not great, in the role, which may be traceable to her performance having that studied aspect of a Miss America aspirant declaiming Keats or Emily Dickinson for that perfunctory two-minute segment in the talent run-up to the pageant's swimsuit competition.

Once, at the end of a Reagan-era gala dinner, John Riggins, football player, decked out in tie and tux, found himself sprawled beneath the table, completely sozzled. He looked up at Associate Justice O'Connor and said, "Loosen up, Sandy baby."

Good advice for a Miss America. Better advice for Sandra Day.

* * *

Someone who can always be counted on to knock back a few is Geordie, the macho lead character in North Belfast playwright Gary Mitchell's excellent *Trust*.

Geordie, played brilliantly by Ritchie Coster, is no mere lager lout. In fact, he always has his wits about him as the coolly calculating neighborhood chieftain of a Protestant paramilitary gang.

Geordie plays the game of political intrigue well, but the part of father to son Jake vexes him throughout the drama. Geordie wants the adolescent to stand up for himself in schoolyard confrontations (as well as to drink like a man), but he will not stick up for the young man because strong-arm tactics, all too easy to command in his line of work, could bring the constabulary down hard on him and his cell of activists. So, home life festers, despite the fact that Pop is always grabbing the missus for a quick smooch on those occasions when the soccer match or Britcom on the telly aren't enough to distract.

Yet he can never be in a clinch for long, because his political family spends as much time in the house as his real one. Seeking favors, deals, trying to stay on his good side are Julie, the good-time girl with the British soldier boyfriend willing to steal weapons from his own base to sell to Geordie for the money to keep Julie; Artty, his sidekick and accomplice in the effort to make their idea of a man out of Jake; and the dimwit ex-con Trevor, a combustible mix of servility and uncontrollable temper who is really into "orange," you might say: He has "UDA" (Ulster Defence Association) tattooed into the side of his neck.

If you can get past the almost constant use of a once-shocking Anglo-Saxonism—and who can't, because that's the unfortunate way they speak throughout the British Isles today, to the disappointment of my rampant literary and historical Anglophilia—this is a heck of a play that builds to an entirely unanticipated and, indeed, terrifying climax.

Donald Lyons of the *New York Post* said that Gary Mitchell is "a dramatist to watch." He is that, as is this splendid seven-member ensemble, most of whose members are Yanks, yet with amazingly precise Anglo-Irish accents. Paula Prather is a dialect coach, if not to watch, then certainly to admire.

James Moses writes from New York City.

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MUSIC

Answering the Call

by Aaron D. Wolf

Brand New Strings

by Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder
Recorded and mixed at
Skaggs Place Studios
Produced by Ricky Skaggs

When Lester Flatt's health began to decline in 1979, he was sure of one thing: All those years, when he was playing Gospel songs with Bill Monroe and Earl Scruggs, he had been an unbeliever. Faith, however, comes by hearing, so, after a life spent resisting the call of Christ, mediated through the ancient tones of the music of his ancestors, Mr. Flatt, like the Ethiopian eunuch, was ready to have his sins washed away. Down in his hometown of Sparta, Tennessee, his preacher took him out to a familiar creek, where he helped Lester out of his wheelchair and down into the water in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. "Oh, why did I wait so long?" he began to exclaim as he emerged from the water, weeping at the thought of his new birth here at the end of his life.

Ricky Skaggs, chief among Bill Monroe's disciples, has been a mandolin and fiddle virtuoso nearly all of his life, having played with Monroe, Flatt and Scruggs, and Ralph and Carter Stanley by the age of ten. Now, at 50, he is devoting himself to spreading both the good news that bluegrass is as good as ever and the Good News of Christ. Like Flatt, though, Skaggs took a few detours before heading back home.

In the late 70's, Skaggs felt compelled to leave the old homestead of bluegrass for the bright lights of Nashville. He toured with Emmylou Harris before embarking on his own stellar career, in which he was named the 1985 CMA entertainer of the year and garnered eight Grammys and numerous number ones for such singles as "Cajun Moon" and "Don't Cheat in Our Hometown." Though it wasn't bluegrass, it was country with a traditionalist twist, which caused Chet Atkins to say that, in the 1980's, Ricky Skaggs single-handedly saved country music. (Las Vegas lounge singer Lee Greenwood had been named CMA male vocalist of the year in 1984.)

By 1996, it was safe to say that Ricky Skaggs had gone places. But the music of his people was calling him home. He wanted to record more and more folk tunes, but Epic, his label, wasn't interested. So Skaggs did "the best thing I've ever done": He started his own record label and "came out of the wilderness of country music into the promised land of bluegrass." (That was well before the bluegrass/newgrass/roots revival that followed the 2000 release of the film *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*) Ever since, he's been tearing through the studio and across the country, recording one fine album after another, including his blazing 2003 offering *Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder: Live at the Charleston Music Hall*.

Brand New Strings, Skaggs' latest, is a quieter, more reflective record. Only once, in the title cut, does it approach the tempo of *Live*, relying instead on powerful lyrics and haunting melodies to carry the day. In *Strings*, Skaggs follows his familiar formula for his bluegrass albums, combining old standards with his own instrumentals and the best work of his songwriting friends who share his philosophy: a deep commitment to native place, a love for home and family life, an enjoyment of the simple things, and faith in the Savior. ("I'm a sucker for a new song that has that old sound to it.")

Brand New Strings kicks off with Rusty and Doug Kershaw's "Sally Jo," one of Monroe's favorites. Rusty Kershaw played guitar on Monroe's original recording of the song, where he "whipped that guitar like a mule." Kentucky Thunder member Cody Kilby, Skaggs' "gun for hire," does plenty of his own whipping on this cut, and Jim Mills, a repeat winner of the International Bluegrass Association's banjo player of the year award, shines here.

The original songs capture, to various degrees, a traditional bluegrass sound, and each one is true to its ethos. "Sis Draper" (Guy Clark and Shawn Camp) tells of a mythic fiddling enchantress from Arkansas, who sings and plays with magnolias in her hair. The lyrics are fun, especially against the Cajun-leaning accompaniment. "Sis Draper is her daddy's daughter / Plays the fiddle that he bought her / Plays it like her Mammy taught her / She's a travelin' Arkansas-yer."

Even better is "If I Had It All Again to Do," the first-person account of a man who leaves his old homestead, which was "good enough for my Dad and his daddy, too," because that's what boys do nowadays to be successful. "It's where seven generations made their living and their life / I would be the first to move away," he says, which made me think of Skaggs leaving for Nashville and my own grandparents leaving the Ozark hills for work in Illinois. "I still see Mom and Daddy as they waved me goodbye / And the painful tears running down their face." How many old Southerners I have heard express the same sentiment, thinking about their parents' graves hundreds of miles away, about the creeks and hollers where they fished and hunted, as they look across the ever-increasing megalopolis of Greater Chicagoland. "I'd sure make a world of changes / If I had it all again to do."

Included on *Brand New Strings* is a fuller version of one of my favorites from Skaggs' country days, a bluegrass number originally recorded for a silly Patrick Swayze movie, *Next of Kin*, but dropped by the film's producers. In "My Father's Son," Skaggs captures the pride of rural mountain people who are pleased to be known by their family names, the antidote to "If I Had It All Again to Do." "My history is no secret—it's written in the stones / In the hill beside this river rests my mother's gentle bones." Pride in one's parents, in one's kin, is a rare quality these days, and it is refreshing to hear it celebrated: "When they lay me down, remind them / I was just my father's son."

The best track on this record is "Why Did I Wait So Long?"—one of those new songs that sounds old. Inspired by the story of Lester Flatt's baptism, Skaggs' friend Shawn Lane has composed a tune reminiscent of the old shape-note Gospel songs so familiar to rural Southern people. "God's been with me through troubled times / With hands not seen, He's guided my way": words that could have come from Lester Flatt or from Saint Augustine's *Confessions*. "But my foolish pride and worldly things / Kept me from Him until today."

It's that foolish pride and those worldly things that destroy real families, a real way of life like that of the old subsistence farmers that Andrew Lytle speaks of in "The Hind Tit," and the real music that extols kinfolk and roots and lightens the load of life's hardships. But Ricky Skaggs is calling us back—back to that real life and back to the Faith. Those who are blessed to hear this record can sing along with him and Lester Flatt: "Why did I wait so long to answer the call / From the Greatest of All?" After all, faith comes by hearing.

Aaron D. Wolf is the associate editor of Chronicles.

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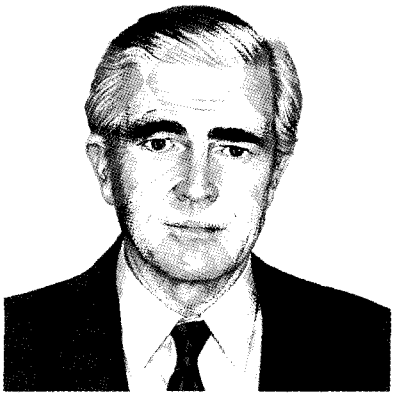
by George McCartney

Saint Aborta and the Molesters



Vera Drake

Produced by Thin Man Films and Studio Canal
Written and directed by Mike Leigh
Distributed by New Line Cinema

Birth

Produced and distributed by Fine Line Features
Directed by Jonathan Glazer
Screenplay by Jean-Claude Carrière and Milo Addica

Mike Leigh, one of Britain's socialist directors, begins and ends his latest effort, *Vera Drake*, with plangent harp strings backed by a keening choir. It is music orchestrated to canonize his title character, who is, in a very modern sense of an old-fashioned word, a saint.

We first meet the eponymous Vera hurrying through the low-rent council-housing streets of 1950 London. After a long day's labor, she is eager to get home. She talks and sings to herself with that bustling cheer one notices in the truly selfless. This woman has never dreamt of complaining about her lot in life. Through sheer goodwill, she has transformed the cramped four-room apartment she shares with her husband and their two grown children into a cozy wonder of domestic felicity. She supplements her husband's modest income by cleaning the homes of the wealthy, and she somehow manages also to tend to the needs of many others—her apartment-bound mum, an invalid neighbor, a young veteran down on his luck. What's more, this angel of mercy has time to help seemingly numberless young women suffering from that all-too-common malady, the inconvenient pregnancy. More than a good neighbor, Vera is a principled abortionist at a time when terminating pregnancies is punishable by law. She is willing to kill anyone's baby with her preparation of carbolic acid administered by rubber tube and syringe, no questions asked. Abandoned girls, careless adulteresses, overburdened mothers, playgirls—they are all one to Vera: They are all "girls in trouble." Vera's commitment is admirably disinterested. After more than 20 years in her trade, she has never taken so much as a ha'pence for her services. She is, in short, Saint Aborta. By the end of the film, of course, she will be martyred for her corporal works of mercy.

A little math will give you an idea of Vera's dedication. The film takes place between October and Christmas. During this span, we watch Vera perform six abortions. Well, we do not exactly watch; Leigh is ever so careful not to show us any blood, mucus, or other biological debris. He does not want to upset us in quite that way. Political provocation is his game; he has avoided any visuals that might elicit our instinctive horror at abortion's residue. It would not do to distract his audience from the lesson at hand.

Back to the math. At this frequency, Vera would perform 24 abortions a year. That is 480 across the 20 years that she has been at it. Not nearly so brisk a rate as today's abortion mills, of course, but it indicates what an ordinary woman could accomplish in the benighted past before medical abortions were made legal. And imagine this: During her career, Vera has never known one of her girls to suffer untoward consequences—except for her last patient, the one whose troubles finally alert the authorities. Of course, this may have to do with how her procedures are scheduled. She never knows the identity of her "patients," nor do they know hers. It's all brokered by Vera's friend, Lily. Vera meets these women at their homes, where she first consoles them over a nice cup of tea and then boils a pot of water into which she shaves a bar of carbolic soap. She then introduces the solution into each woman's uterus with her syringe and rubber tube, reassuring them all the while. "Now, just lie back and go all floppy for me, dear, and tell me when you feel full down there." The procedure done, she gathers her tools and tells the woman to expect some discomfort in a day or two. "Just get yourself to a toilet. It will come away, and you'll be right as rain." Really? Having an abortion in this way, even in the early stages of a pregnancy, is neither easy nor safe. A woman's body is well designed to protect a healthy fetus. Killing an unborn child requires extreme measures, after which the woman must go through all the rigors of labor. Since most of Vera's clients would be doing so on their own, out of sight of parents, lovers, or husbands, one must wonder how "right as rain" they would be feeling during and after. It is one thing to experience labor as a necessary trial in the cause of life; it is quite something else to undergo it in the cause of death. Furthermore, given Vera's limited acquaintance with antisepsis, there is always the risk of infection to contend with.

To the "right-as-rain" implausibility, Leigh adds some others. Vera and her husband—who knows nothing of her illegal practice—are members of the poor-but-honest working class. They are just scraping by in postwar, heavily rationed London. Would such a woman not seek payment for her services, not even bus or tube fare? Would she have never caught on to her "friend" Lily, who has been charging five pounds for each referral? Of all the women who have passed through Vera's hands, wouldn't one or another have dropped a hint concerning Lily's fee? As played by the gifted Imelda Staunton, Vera is a simple person, but not at all simpleminded. Leigh, however, is so determined to have us venerate his Saint Aborta that he is willing to burst the envelope of verisimilitude. And, then, just as you are thinking to yourself that Leigh wouldn't dare to pile it any higher, he shoves Vera's arrest on us. Of all the anonymous girls whom Vera has "helped," the one who suffers complications is the daughter of an acquaintance. When the mother is forced to take her daughter to the hospital, the police are called in, and she soon exposes Vera as the person responsible for the girl's near demise. Shortly afterward, the authorities come knocking on the Drakes' door. As

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fate would have it, they arrive just as Vera's entire family is gathered to celebrate her daughter's engagement and her sister-in-law's pregnancy.

You wouldn't think such a ghastly soap opera would succeed with the critics, but it has, splendidly so. The accolades have gushed unstoppably from mainstream reviewers: "Stunningly real"; "authentic"; "heartbreaking"; "gripping." The tribute I admire most comes from the redoubtable Roger Ebert, who judges the film "pitch-perfect," to which I say, amen. It is a "perfect" example of the weirdly self-assured pro-abortion propaganda that is now standard in our transatlantic discourse, and it is unquestionably as foul as "pitch."

Leigh's intent, of course, is to dramatize abortion-on-demand as a inalienable right. As much as he admires Vera, he also wants to make it clear that we should not have to rely on such saintly intervention. Abortion should be guaranteed and funded by the state. Since this has been the case in England since 1967, I wondered why he felt compelled to make the film at all. The answer came when Leigh appeared on CNBC's *Topic [A] With Tina Brown*. Leigh confided to Tina that he had timed the film to open just before the American election, hoping to help the pro-abortion John Kerry win. To think that a British film director should be so solicitous of our right to kill infants! It's enough to make you question the wisdom of our Revolution.

The enthusiastic response to *Vera Drake* serves as a moral barometer of our times. Imagine a pro-life drama exhibiting a fraction of the sentimentality Leigh has contrived. Howls of derision would deafen its reception on opening day. It would be excoriated as a public peril. This is where we are. Forty years ago, *abortion* was a word either whispered discreetly or spat contemptuously. Today, it is invoked as a label of honor.

If you want to see a film that deals with this issue with unusual honesty, not to mention piercingly satiric humor, search out Alexander Payne's *Citizen Ruth* on DVD. Payne is not an absolutist. He ridicules zealotry on both sides of the argument, but he heaps special scorn on the pro-abortionists.

Jonathan Glazer's *Birth* reveals the other side of Leigh's coin. If unborn infants are expendable, it follows that we need not concern ourselves unduly with protecting other children.

Birth is a pointlessly perverse film, both morally and aesthetically. This is not surprising, since one of its writers is the sly, amoral provocateur Jean-Claude Carrière, who collaborated with Luis Bunuel on such films as *Belle du Jour* and *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*. Several critics consider Carrière's involvement as warrant to take *Birth* seriously. I would argue to the contrary. Carrière is nothing more than a twittering nihilist who takes his pleasure in trying to disturb his long-time enemy, the bourgeoisie, who, in their turn, have repaid his insults handsomely by attending his films in large and adoring numbers, thinking themselves awfully sophisticated for doing so.

I do not think *Birth* will garner such doggy adulation, however. The narrative is a compilation of half-baked ideas revolving around the tired conceit of reincarnation. Anna (Nicole Kidman) is a fabulously wealthy 35-year-old widow whose husband, Sean, died ten years earlier. We meet her just as she has surrendered to Joseph (Danny Huston), a suitor importunate enough to have wooed her for the last three years. Then, on the evening of their engagement party, a preternaturally solemn ten-year-old boy, also named Sean (Cameron Bright), slips into Anna's Manhattan apartment uninvited to inform her that he is her Sean reborn and that she must not marry Joseph. Shocked at first, Anna soon sends the kid on his way, laughing with her sister over his weird intrusion. Young Sean keeps coming back, however, revealing an uncannily detailed knowledge of Anna's life with her husband. He can even report their most intimate moments, such as the night they "did it on the couch." With no rational explanation for his knowledge, Anna starts to accept his paranormal claim that he is her husband reborn.

From here, things go willfully—or perhaps lazily—awry. When Sean sneaks into Anna's bathroom one evening, takes off his clothing, and slips into the tub with her, the film violates its aesthetic contract with its audience irreparably. Confronted by the spectacle of a ten-year-old boy sitting opposite the naked Kidman, you cannot help stepping outside the narrative's imaginative construct to raise real-world questions. How did shooting this scene affect Bright? Would Glazer have been so reckless had his actress been someone exhibiting more emphatically developed secondary sexual characteristics than those of the boyish Kidman—say, Catherine Zeta-Jones? What if the sexes had been reversed? Say it was a grieving widower encountering in his tub his reincarnated wife in the body of a ten-year-old girl? The scene as shot comes within a hair's breadth of pedophilia. When, after a long pause, Kidman's Anna somewhat reluctantly orders the boy from her tub, you know the limits of the acceptable are being flouted. What comes next? Fourth-grade instruction in the art of foreplay, or is this already established in our national curriculum?

Leaving the tub, the film begins to drip with cynically managed plot turns. It reaches a soggily queasy nadir when Anna asks young Sean how he proposes to meet her "needs" should they set up house together. Bright looks up from the ice-cream soda Anna has bought him and replies, "I know what you're talking about." Indeed. Then the supernatural conceit is dropped altogether and replaced with a wholly improbable "realistic" explanation for the boy's behavior. This means, of course, he has no relation to her dead husband. You could laugh at such trash if the spectacle of adults compromising the moral and psychological welfare of a young boy did not forbid such relief.

The only reason to take notice of this film is its casual, careless decadence. Bright's parents should seek counseling, preferably from a behind-the-times clergyman. For Glazer and Carrière, horsewhipping would be an act of mercy. c

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by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

The Curse of Activism

Activist, activism: These are two of the ugliest, falsest, and most sinister words in the English language. As citizens of the Age of Activism, subject to the unremitting harassment of activists who refuse to leave society in peace, we need to understand the phenomenon they represent, as well as to recognize it.

According to my Webster's Dictionary, the noun *activism* dates from 1915 and is defined as "a doctrine or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action (as a mass demonstration) in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue." This definition strikes me as being as outdated as a protest by feminists marching in pedal-pushers. The reason is that people cannot contrive to live their entire lives as one long and uninterrupted demonstration, while modern-day activists have no difficulty in consecrating themselves to activism as completely as a convent nun does to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. For nearly all activists (including many of those who claim to act in the name of religion), religion represents escapism in its most reprehensible form; activism, the radical embrace of reality.

They could not be more wrong, of course. The solitary nun praying her rosary contemplates wholeness in the particularity of a wooden bead; the activist at his computer, networking unseen strangers in cyberspace on behalf of a cause that has been abstracted out of existence, concentrates his being on an existential pinpoint no angel could recognize clearly enough to dance upon. The activist congratulates himself on living the fullest life of which a human being is capable, entailing the most direct engagement possible with the world. For him, only the activist is truly active, just as, for the Marxist, the working man alone works at all. His ideal is a Long March Through the Institutions led by Col. Teddy Roosevelt, the Strenuous Life in service to a revolutionary or deconstructionist political program. In truth, he has forfeited his life for a pathetic half-life as constraining of his own humanity as it is destructive of the society in which he and his fellow cybershades operate. He has become what 20th-century English Jesuit Philip Caraman wonderfully described as "a mere fragment of a man dwelling in a shadow world."

All of us are familiar with the activist in one cause or another, whose entire life is spent visiting websites, copying and posting links, e-mailing predrafted faxes, now and again attending a meeting of like-minded people—or differently-minded ones, in which case the aim is to infiltrate or demonstrate, as the case may be. To this miserable existence, he has too often sacrificed finding a wife, raising a family, experiencing and enjoying and appreciating the world as its exists outside his own narrow forehead. (No wonder he is gray-faced and weak-chested, relentlessly angry, perennially embittered, perpetually disappointed, and always dissatisfied with life as he finds it.) Before the communications revolution, his life was broader, though not by much. In those days (perhaps this is only an impression), activists indeed did more demonstrating and meeting-going, saw more of the world and of the people in it, witnessed history at times—and exercised their generative powers to create a generation of little activists to succeed them. Today, the most successful of them compose a sort of celibate counterbureaucracy, whose work consists of writing tendentious newspaper advertisements, "spinning" stories for the media, hiring lawyers and directing lobbyists, and raising money.

Activists as a class are pathetic people, possibly deserving of pity rather than blame. They are also public nuisances, with the alarming potential to be menaces as well. Beyond that is the effect (or success, as activists see it) activism has had in splintering large wholes into incoherent small parts, while fatally narrowing the scope of reality as healthy people are wont to view it. The result is that, in order to stand up to activism and confront the activists on their own ground, we have all become, willy-nilly and to some degree or another, activists now. This situation bodes ill for any society. Activists, of course, insist that the citizen's immersion in private life is "escapist." In fact, the truth is just the opposite: Escapism, for all but a small elite, means the self-immersion of mass-minded people (which most activists are) in public life. And the reason why this form of escapism is dangerous was explained four decades ago by Kenneth Minogue, when he observed that "a political policy which aims at attaining any of the supposed conditions of freedom is likely to destroy free behaviour." Of course, attaining more of these supposed conditions of freedom is a paramount aim of activists—whose results in lost freedoms are spectacularly evident all around us.

For years, conservative writer Jeffrey Hart has praised modernism for the nearly infinite possibilities it affords differentiation and specialization—hence, he claims, individual freedom. I think he has a point, but I am not sure that the freedom Hart has in mind has been an unqualified success either in individualistic or in social terms. If we are all activists now, this is partly because we are all specialists now, forced and seduced in almost equal measure into our own partial and compartmentalized view of the world, imposing its narrow and circumscribed concerns that the hysteria of modern life usually presents to us in context as critically pressing ones.

The sun hasting to the place of his going down takes no account of the information revolution, making it ever more difficult to stay abreast of developments even in those reduced spheres of interest in which we make it our business to keep up, whether the subject in question is environmentalism, immigration reform, international trade, abortion, war, terrorism, states' rights, "values," religious freedom, healthcare, judicial tyranny, morality in scientific research, workers' rights, the rights of capital, animal rights, voting reform, or any of the other myriad issues that galvanize activists on both sides of these questions, while annoying or boring those who stand in between them. It is inevitable, as well as essential, that issues such as these should be discussed—

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even agitated—in a free society. There are, nevertheless, a number of problems associated with agitation, as activists engage in it.

The first of these, being obvious enough, has been widely recognized as well. Activism—which, for the concerned citizen, is an avocation—is, for the professional activist (and the professionalization of activism is among the most significant phenomena of our time), a living, at least, and often a lucrative career, in addition to a vocation. This gives the activist a tremendous advantage over his nonprofessional opponent—something which, while not ordinarily a proper case for the law courts, still raises valid questions regarding the power exercised by special interests in a modern democracy.

The second problem is the splintering of public attention and perception to the extent that it can no longer focus on the total picture—or even recollect that there *is* such a thing as a total picture—much less have an interest in the totality that picture represents. The result is that environmental activists (for instance), their sympathizers, and supporters relate (and usually subordinate) all other public issues, international as well as national, to the structure of environmental crises and solutions with which they are single-mindedly concerned. In this way, every issue becomes a "single issue"—the vile epithet hurled in the 1970's and 80's against antiabortionism, which (as Joseph Sobran explained decades ago) is almost the *single* activist movement not to deserve it. (Another is immigration restriction.) Enthusiasms of this sort quite naturally tend to blinker people, and even to blind them. Where activism is concerned, however, the victims are not the activists alone but society as a whole. Activism has become simply how modern people (most of them deprived, not coincidentally, of religious faith) prefer to comprehend reality—that is to say, in bits and pieces. Even nonactivists tend to assume nowadays that public life amounts to one gang of activists fighting the other and that their personal welfare—and that of the country—is best served when the gang whose interests seem closest to their own prevails over the others.

The third problem with activism is that activists, in their single-minded devotion to their single cause, are drawn inevitably to confuse it with themselves. We all know the type: the free trader, for instance, who cannot really say, finally, whether he has devoted his life to the cause of free trade because it is the single most important thing in the world or whether it is the single most important thing in the world because he has devoted his life to it. Such people, being unshakable in their fanaticism, should perhaps be left to it. Unfortunately, they are more tenacious than bulldogs in their hold on a corner, at least, of the public discourse, from which they can hardly be shaken at all.

It is a paradoxical feature of the modern differentiation Professor Hart celebrates that today everything tends toward the same thing. An example of this tendency is the way a professional reputation gets made and maintained these days, reputation having become pretty much dependent on specialization—which is only a professional term for the marketer's creation of a brand product and his undeviating determination to maintain all the established associations connected with it. Long-term success, in other words, lies in getting yourself known for having done something—and then doing that one thing over and over again, as consistently and changelessly as possible, for the duration of a career. To do otherwise is to alter the established brand, blur the familiar identity, complicate your marketers' job of selling you, confuse and disappoint your audience, fans, and followers, let everybody else down, and ruin yourself. If, for example, you have made a name as an environmentalist writer, don't—for God's sake!—write a biography of Mozart next. If you are known as an activist in consumer issues, let someone else worry about global warming. If you have written a book advocating immigration reform, then write another and another one after that, not neglecting to contribute to journals on the subject and to attend as many immigration restrictionist meetings around the country as you can possibly manage to make. This is the reality of the intellectual and political life of our times, making indeed for a reassuring predictability in public discourse but also for an incoherent incompleteness in the public view of reality. Thus, it encourages the agitated disproportionality of the activist society, by reinforcing the fragmentary-mindednes of the specialized one.

"For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Individual free will is not a thing that Christians, anyhow, are at liberty to dispute. Nevertheless, I do not believe it is heretical to suggest that history, in its broadest outlines at least, is indeed determined—not by God necessarily but by forces men themselves create and set in motion by their own collective will, which is at once something more and something less than many multitudes of individual wills. I may deplore the use of automobiles because they create hundred of thousands of tons of carbon monoxide that destroy the ozone layer and warm Earth's atmosphere. As an individual, I am free not to own a car or to junk the one I own and buy a horse instead. Such an exercise of the individual will satisfies most consciences, but by no means all. The activist's conscience may (or again, it may not) goad him to abjure driving altogether, for a starter. But it insists on more than this: It goads him to launch a campaign to force the automotive industry to retool to produce nonpolluting vehicles or even to ban automobiles altogether. Losing all perspective as well as proportion, he imagines a day when not only has the environment been dramatically cleansed through his efforts but the world itself has been stamped by his personal will according to the vision he has for it. This is not the way the world works, however. While it is amazing what Orwellian Newspeak and the hypnopaedia of Aldous Huxley's dystopia have been able to accomplish in the way of mass brainwashing over the last 50 years, propagandizing is a far easier task than activism. The activist is someone wholly inflamed by what Hayek calls "the passion for conscious control of everything." Of course, the activist, like every man who ever lived, does well if he ever manages to achieve control of himself. As an integral part of the world he deplores, he is closer to it than he knows: half its creature; half its creator. The world, like time itself, waits for no man—the man who belongs to it, particularly. Denying the connection, and the dependence, the activist makes a Faustian bargain of his own, which he seals by disdaining to meet the finger of God and reaching out to touch the Pretender's claw instead.

The activist temptation is dangerous both to the heart and head of society and those of its individual members. In a country like our own, where virtually every politician is an activist whose constituents expect an activist approach to government from him, the problem is particularly grave. What the solution is, I have no idea, if indeed there *is* a solution. One thing I do know for certain: The answer is not an activist campaign, waged by counteractivist campaigners.

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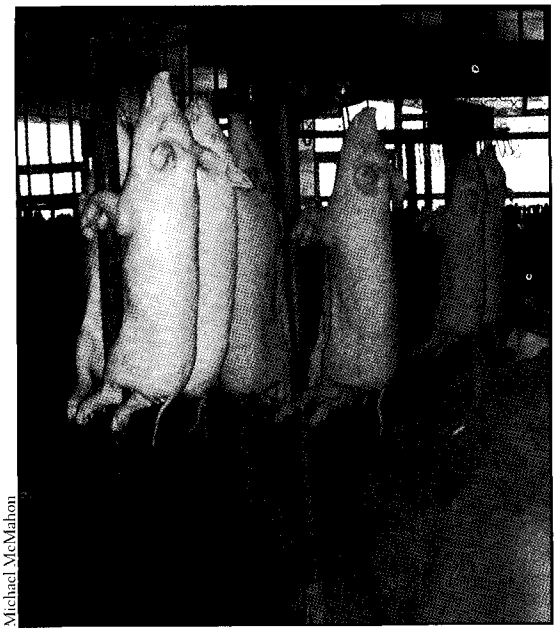
by Michael McMahon

From the Mountains Above Batumi

The Black Sea city of Batumi used to be beautiful, and, under a foot of freshly fallen snow, Batumi is beautiful again. Stuccoed terraces of tired 19th-century buildings sit doorstep-deep in white. Chuckling gutters trim the softness draped over corrugated iron roofs. Concrete tenements fade out of focus, their drabness merging with the gray of the sky. Snowflakes fall like feathers. Behind them, the tree-scratched foothills of Georgia's mountains are like an etching on frosted glass.

There has been a power outage, as there often is in post-Soviet Georgia. At midday, the entrance corridor of the indoor market is lit by candles in bottles. Inside, daylight falls feebly through the glazing, covering the stalls in crepuscular calm. On the ground floor, long rows of trestles display vegetables and fruit set out in neat geometrical patterns. On the mezzanine floor, there is meat. Plucked and dressed chickens hold out their feet to browsing shoppers. In a candlelit corner, a ten-yard table is jumble-sale high with offal, liver by heart by kidney. Underneath it, a half-dozen calves' heads gaze from the floor into the middle distance with an air of—well, detachment. A carousel of pink-skinned sucking pigs is turned by a man puffing on a cigarette.



Michael McMahon

Pigs hang in a market in Batumi.

I hadn't planned to linger in the city. I had hitched a lift on the press plane to Adjara so that I could get up into the mountains of the Caucasus. I had a hope—a crazy hope, really—that I might find there not only unspoiled scenery but unspoiled people living in and with it. Maybe, just maybe, there might still be some margins of post-post-Christian Europe unmarked by the culture that has turned most of us into such miserable shoppers-and-fornicators. On day two, I have my chance to find out. The snow hasn't eased up, but Maka, my translator, has found a driver with a four-wheel-drive vehicle.

When the car door opens, Georgian folk music rolls over the steps of the hotel. Maka recognizes the song instantly. It is "Chakrulo," she says. NASA sent it into outer space as an example of the human voice at its best. Bidzina, our driver, is an engineer. He has offered his time and his car as an act of friendship to a stranger. Such things are not unusual in Georgia, explains Maka. If I want to see and write about his country, he is more than happy to help.

We head off into the mountains along roads that soon turn to tracks. The snow on the trees holds daylight as a soufflé holds air. Mist the color of unpolished pewter hangs over the river. We stop at a tiny village called Machakhela—famous for its gun-making, says Bidzina. Do I like shooting? Absolutely. I describe a formal English shoot, and Bidzina looks at me in disbelief.

When I tell him that I am really a rough shooting man myself, he pulls over to the side of the road, goes round to the back of the vehicle and gets out a pump-action shotgun, which he loads. "Come," he says, "We shoot!" and we crunch off through the snow to a spinney by the side of the track. He takes a shot at a blackbird perched in a tree, but it must be at least a hundred yards away, and he misses. A little later, he thrusts the gun into my hands and points to what is surely an owl. Rather than refuse outright to shoot it, I play for time by asking what kind of bird it is. "I don't know," he says. "Shoot it, and we'll find out." The owl saves the situation by flying off.

Higher up the valley, Bidzina asks whether I am interested in churches. Yes, I am. We park in a little yard in a village and climb some steps to an unremarkable, cement-rendered building. The interior is bare and barn-like; indeed, the place was used as a barn under the communists, before they turned it into a cinema. Now, it is a place of worship again, and two men in their 20's—"servants of the church," Maka calls them—are tidying away some books. Bidzina asks them where we can eat, and one of them, Davit, insists on inviting us to lunch. It is obvious they can ill afford it. They are wearing clothes that would be rejected by any English charity shop. Bidzina suggests a compromise: He'll buy us all lunch in a restaurant, and they can contribute the drink. His friend, Gelasi, says he has some homemade wine at his house, just up the track. What he fetches fills a five-liter container.

The café-bar in the village is a covered yard between some houses, in which cabins like windowless railway compartments have been built. Ours has just enough room for the five of us round the lino-covered table down the middle. We sit on planks covered in coarse industrial carpet. The walls are carpeted, too, and decorated with drawing pins arranged to form crosses. A string of fairy lights runs round the ceiling. In the corner, an empty fish tank sits on a painted iron safe. We keep our coats and hats on. It is cold.

The meal begins traditionally with bread and salt, and Gelasi goes off to fetch some clay drinking horns. They hold about half a bottle's worth, and there is no way of putting them down when they contain wine. The toasts, explains Bidzina, are to be what Maka translates as "bottoms up." Each is preceded by a little speech. "May God bless our friendship," says Davit. "Without friendship, there is nothing." He tells me that the plump pita breads that have been brought to us are called *jadi*; they used to be marked with crosses under communism, to remind people that Christianity was still alive in Georgia.

Between the toasts and speeches, Gelasi tells me that, when Davit was at school, he was beaten for his answer to the question "Does God exist?" Davit is a cantor

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and a folksinger, too. We try to make him sing for us, but he is too shy. By the end of the meal, we have clobbered the five liters of wine between the four of us, Maka having discretely held back. We embrace before departing, and she photographs the four of us standing in the now-melting snow. I feel buoyantly, defiantly, cheerfully sober, but, when the photographs are developed, they suggest that this may not quite have been the case. On the return journey, Bidzina takes the bumps with carefree confidence. Back in Batumi, the snow has all but vanished, but I don't notice the potholed roads or broken paving, for the streets are filled with people—and Batumi looks even more beautiful than before.

Shortly after Michael McMahon's visit, the "rose revolution" reached Batumi. The indoor market has been closed, and the power outages are longer than ever.

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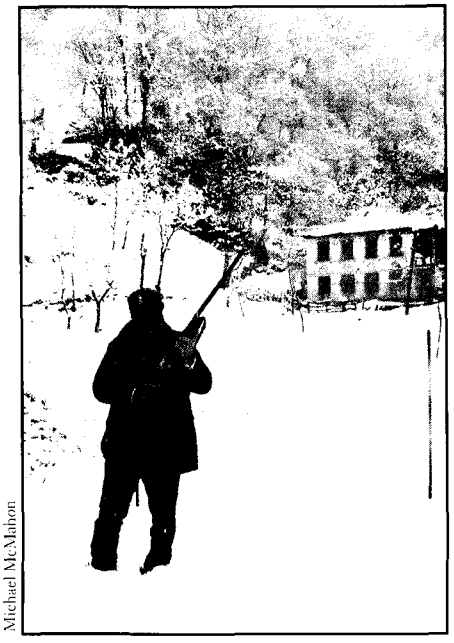
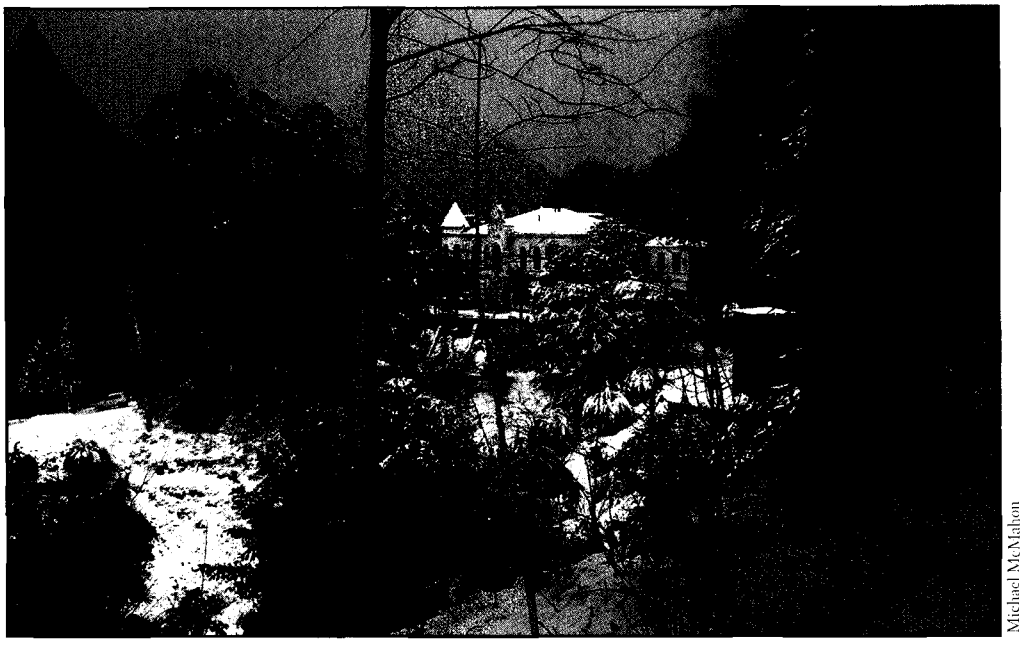


Michael McMahon

Sparing the owl.



Michael McMahon

A snow-covered day in the Georgian mountains.

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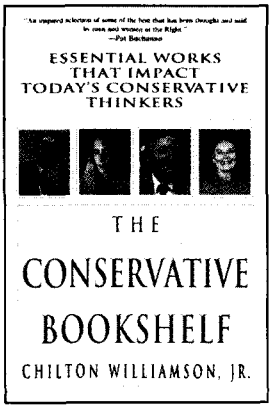

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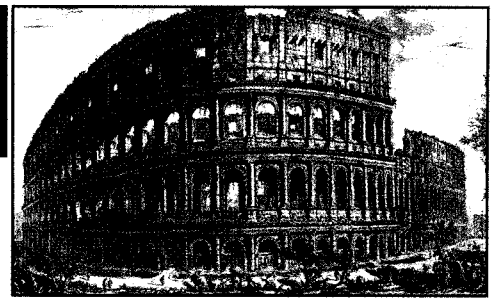

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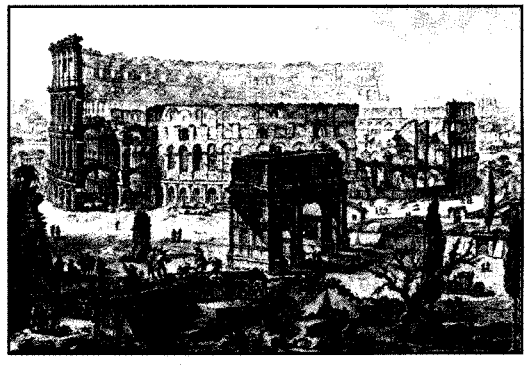

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